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Problematizing Modernity: Gandhi's Decentering Impulse

Ronald J. Terchek

GANDHI PROVIDES A powerful voice that challenges some of the central axioms of modernity. In the process, he champions those who have been ignored or dominated in the grand narrative of modernity and denies its claim that it is natural, objective, and neutral. For him, modernity is only one way of thinking, and frequently a flawed one at that. Among his major objections to modernity is its proclivity to deny the validity of other claims to knowledge/truth and to universalize its applications for all people under all conditions.

Today, questioning modernity is widespread, and Gandhi's voice represents an early refusal to accept the story that modernity is telling about itself. In some ways, his critique is as radical as many post-modern efforts to challenge modernity, but in other ways, he departs markedly from most post-modern thinking.¹ He believes, for example, that it is possible to repair our fragmented world with a cosmological outlook and holds that truths exist and parts of them can be found and practised.

In this paper, I enlist Gandhi as a critic of the universalizing impulse and fatalism of late modernity and argue that his primary interest is in preserving the autonomy of individuals. I argue that Gandhi insists on questioning modernity, not to conclude that it has nothing to offer, but to maintain that modernity cannot set the exclusive standards of what constitutes the good life.² One reason he finds alternative logics require a hearing is not that they are invariably correct but that they offer contestation and controversy, that is, they are political.³ On Gandhi's account, these lost or neglected alternatives usually grasp parts of the truth and often provide fresh ways of seeing the world and the means to challenge late modern versions of orthodoxy.

Gandhi's interrogation of modernity is one of a selective but skeptical borrower. Even though he finds the Enlightenment project encumbered

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with pretentious claims to know the truth, he sees no need to completely reject modernity out of hand.⁴ Hence Gandhi talks about the equality of everyone in his assault on untouchability; he speaks of the rights of women, including their right to govern themselves; and he attacks colonialism as a negation of the modern ideal of equal regard and respect.

Gandhi's Problematizing Impulse

In whatever variant, post-modernism is characterized by its questioning of matters we commonly take as good, natural, or right in the modern era. In its efforts to unsettle and decenter the premises that moderns hold to be beyond the realm of scrutiny, the post-modern temper seeks to show how the constructedness of the modern world favours some over others, leads to practices of domination, and legitimizes disciplinary practices. In many ways, this approach parallels the problematizing proclivities of Gandhi who continually questions much that has been taken for granted in the modern world. He means to show that modernity is not neutral or objective but carries extraordinary costs, even though many of its products provide welcome goods. Gandhi extends his argument to claim that what the modern world has constructed is not the culmination of a universal rationality but a particular rationality that legitimizes disciplinary networks that deprive modern men and women of their autonomy, some more severely than others.

This critique can be seen in his quest for Indian national independence or what he calls *Hind Swaraj*. As an advocate for Indian independence, he claims that his primary quarrel is not with the British; his fight is with modernity.⁵ In its effort to become the dominant way we think and organize the world, modernity makes diversity and plurality remainders of a forgotten past. And Gandhi goes on to argue that Indian independence cannot mean only, or even primarily, Indian national sovereignty.⁶ For him, it must mean that every Indian is self-governing. In this context, British imperialism is only a part of the problem.

As Gandhi understands matters, modernity advances the claim that its knowledge supersedes all other claimants to knowledge. On his account, it does this in several ways. For one, it introduces a science and a technology which can discover and produce things that traditional science and technology cannot. In the process, modernity introduces its own way of organizing things, determining what is important and what is not. And it does this, according to Gandhi, not with brute force, although this is sometimes employed, but by disciplining individuals into accepting the many practices of modernity as legitimate. On his account, too many Indians have already acquiesced in accepting claims of the superiority of modernity and have, in the process, been drawn into a web of discipline where they reconstitute themselves and their understanding of the world.⁷ This can be seen in his observation that his "resistance to Western civilization

is really a resistance to its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation based on the assumption that Asians are fit only to copy everything that comes from the West."⁸

Gandhi's assaults on modernity emerge clearly in his famous, or infamous, attacks on modern medicine, railroads, and machinery in *Hind Swaraj*.⁹ One way of reading Gandhi on these matters, and not an uncommon way in either India or elsewhere, is to find him reactionary. But there is another way of grasping his meaning and that is to notice that he wants to problematize the apparent benefits of science and technology and see it as constructed phenomena that hide their unwelcome consequences and disciplinary character. He believes that if he can demonstrate that modernity is not benign and that it carries its own forms of inequality, domination, and abnormalization, then he can energize Indians to mobilize and resist.¹⁰

This can be seen in his critique of science where he calls attention to its paradoxes. Science promises both control and the truth, but Gandhi questions these claims. He thinks that in a perverse and unexpected way, we have lost control of the march of science.¹¹ When he writes about medicine, for example, he fears people have handed over control of their bodies to others.¹² He also argues that modern medicine's focus on the individual body de-emphasizes other reasons for sickness (such as environmental).

Gandhi finds that as modern science reaches to control nature, it is frequently employed to control people. As he understands matters, India would not have been colonized without modern science which enables the British to assert their sovereignty. As he puts, "It is not the British people who are ruling India but it is modern civilization, through its railways, telegraph, telephones, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilization."¹³

Science is animated by doubt, but no single discovery quiets its uncertainty about the world and conventional reason. Doubt has become, as Hannah Arendt observes, universalized in science which is ever-pressed to investigate new fields and, undermines, revises, and supplants its own current certainties.¹⁴ For this reason, the knowledge provided by science can never be settled, fixed, or stable. Any home it finds on the earth is subject to reconstruction and, in time, to demolition and replacement. But Gandhi holds that ordinary people desire and require some measure of stability to build a self-governing life for themselves. As he understands matters, fluidity, novelty, and incessant change create background conditions that are confusing and fragmented. In such a world, we become both preoccupied with day-to-day problem-solving and less interested, Gandhi fears, in finding stable truths.

For all of his misgivings about modern science, he denies that he is "an opponent, a foe of science." Rather, he claims, he is concerned "about the misuse of science."¹⁵ What this means in practice can only be controversial,

but Gandhi insists that too often the subject-matter of modern scientific inquiry and the ways that science is applied are hardly neutral. Unless modern science is problematized, he argues, it will never be resisted. Even though Gandhi is not forthcoming about the appropriate boundaries for modern science and its uses, he insists that scientific knowledge should ultimately contribute to self-knowledge.¹⁶ And he insists that its material benefits must be directed at the most vulnerable. For Gandhi, "the individual," not science or technology, "is the one supreme consideration."¹⁷ With this in mind, he directs his problematizing efforts to a critique of the grand narrative of progress that is at the heart of modernity.¹⁸

The Grand Narrative

The grand narrative attempts to gather all of the disparate, sometimes messy, pieces of life and society into a coherent whole which explains why things are what they are and what must be done to make them fit better, if not perfectly. In the process, the grand narrative is able to assign labels to people, practices, and all sorts of other things, holding some are positive and some are not. From this perspective, some must be nurtured and some impeded and some must be counted as allies and some as enemies. The successful culmination of the grand narrative comes when we are left with only the positive, mature, and friendly. Such a stance characterizes Marxism, market analysis, and nationalism; but for Gandhi, these are expressions of the core problem, that is to say, modernity.

With the grand narrative, we are asked to surrender what is unique when it fails to conform to the plan and pace of progress. Progress becomes a benevolent but blind process that proclaims we are, on the whole, better off than we had been and promises that the future will be better still. Such promises can be honestly made and even met because of the specific meaning accorded to "better off" and because they receive their validation by looking at the successful members of the modernized sectors of society and ignoring the rest.

Gandhi recoils at this account because it smothers community and the autonomy he believes community promotes. For him, autonomy is not to be confused with modern conceptions of individualism which, he insists, separates persons from one another. On Gandhi's reading of modern individualism, persons are largely left to their own devices and made responsible for the successes and failures that visit them. Gandhi fears that such a stance ignores how much individuals depend on others.

He cannot imagine human beings alone and isolated from one another. As I shall elaborate later, he places men and women in an interdependent cosmos where he imagines that they not only respect one another but also carry duties to each other. For Gandhi, human beings become autonomous when they are embedded in a vibrant community which provides them with moral standards to judge themselves as well as networks of cooperation

which serve as a source of mutual assistance and respect.¹⁹ For this to occur, Gandhi believes that power must be dispersed and inequalities narrowed. Then, he argues, a self can emerge that is confident in its own integrity as well as proud of the contribution it is making to the broader community.²⁰

But Gandhi does not believe this happens when modernity appears; initially, its occupation is partial. Some parts of society are modernized but others are not, and society becomes incoherent as the old and new parts move in different, often conflicting, directions. It frequently means that some are much worse off—socially, psychologically, economically, and/or politically—than they were before. From the story told in the grand narrative, however, this is a transition cost which, over time will lead to increasing productivity and growth, eventually reaching those now excluded. Notice this argument holds that modernity can keep its promises and is, therefore, the legitimate way to proceed. This Gandhi rejects. As he sees matters, modernity can never fulfil its promises. One reason is that they are incommensurable: greater growth requires more discipline; more science leads to more fragmentation; more individualism diminishes a sense of community and personal responsibility. Taken together, these consequences contradict the humanitarian impulses of modernity. The more modernity honours its economic promises of prosperity, the more it needs to normalize, regularize, and supervise. From Gandhi's perspective, it cannot help but discipline deviant identities and diminish alternative ways of thinking and acting.

In accepting the grand narrative, according to Gandhi, individuals usually do not recognize what is happening to them and accept its story as natural and inevitable. As a consequence, they allow themselves to become the playthings of a historic process they cannot fully understand, much less control. The idea of inevitable progress introduces, for someone like Gandhi, not a march to emancipation but a new form of fatalism which disenfranchises individuals who are now assigned places in a process outside of their reach and control.

Modern Fatalism

The grand narrative tells a story about how many of the most important things in the world and the people we have become are matters that cannot be significantly otherwise. If we stop growth, then the economy falls apart. If we do away with centralization and bureaucratic structures, we invite chaos. If we challenge complexity, we give up all kinds of future good things. If we undermine progress, we unglue all that is positive. If, if, if . . . then all kinds of bad things happen. However, Gandhi finds that we do not control growth, progress, centralization, bureaucracies, or complexity. He fears that we have allowed ourselves, in very critical ways, to be controlled by them. Here I have in mind much more than such matters as bureaucratic

regulations which tell us to do this but not that or economic imperatives that displace traditional occupations, although each is part of the picture for Gandhi.

Rather, I argue that Gandhi holds that because (and not in spite of) modernity, the transformations that mark the late modern period, human beings are not, in the ordinary course of events, in control. A process (or many processes) beyond their comprehension propel matters along. The best that people can do is to explain matters after the fact and hope for the best in the future. However much we critique the megainstitutions that have become a central part of late-modern society and the practices associated with the modern metanarrative of progress, matters do not seem to respond appreciably to our best efforts.²¹ This fatalism in the late modern era is something that Gandhi finds disturbing and debilitating.

Are we, then, fated to take the current situation as intractable, carried along by an uncontrollable momentum and robbed of the chance to have a say in these matters? To have a say about who we are? Gandhi thinks not.²² To have a chance in gaining some of the control we want, he thinks it is necessary to have a clear understanding of the causes that distress us. This leads him to question modernity at its core. He takes up the axioms and assumptions we take for granted and exposes their consequences.

For Gandhi, this can lead to *satyagraha* or civil disobedience which can be seen as not only challenging injustice but also fatalism. In mounting challenges to what appears to be solid and permanent obstacles that are unaffected by human aspirations or actions, Gandhi holds that apparently weak and powerless individuals are now able to take charge of their own lives. On Gandhi's account, this sometimes leads to change, but even when it does not, he believes that the moral assertiveness of individuals put them in charge of what they make important and what they do. In his own life, Gandhi confronts fatalism with his civil disobedience, taking on the British empire and challenging the cultural and religious elite of India.

Gandhi's Archaeology

In order to resist the totalizing claims and fatalism carried by the grand narrative, Gandhi offers his own archaeological approach to digging out truths as a way of empowering those who have been dominated or marginalized by the prevailing order, whether traditional or modern.²³ In proceeding in his nonacademic way, he devotes himself to uncovering actual practices that disable and then challenges them. In his archaeological excavations, he searches for fragments of the truth that he believes have been covered over. For Gandhi, these fragments speak to the autonomy of all persons as well as to the transcendent nature of everyone. What follows in this section focuses on Gandhi's excavations of his own tradition, but he employs an archaeological strategy in his critique of modernity.

As he understands matters, each tradition expresses fragments of the truth in its own vernacular and symbols. But because these are the

expressions of human beings, they are subject both to the decay that describes the human condition as well as to the possibilities for renewal and revitalization.²⁴ His archaeological exercises have three dimensions. One is to identify the fragments of the truth he believes lie at the core of traditions, including his own; a second is to uncover the layers of sediment that have hidden the core and seek to stand in its place. Finally, he means to convey the findings of his excavation in the local dialect of the marginalized so they can act.

He employs these strategies in his campaign on behalf of untouchables attempting to open the Vykom Temple Road, in his work with striking textile workers in Ahmedabad, and in his salt *satyagraha*.²⁵ And they appear in his arguments regarding the equality of women.²⁶ His archaeological approach does not look at traditional texts or practices as sacrosanct expressions of unchallengeable knowledge. Rather, he wants to move beyond standard readings of traditional practices and expose those that spawn domination. When he turns to gender relations, he finds: "The ancient laws were made by seers who were men. The women's experience, therefore, is not represented in them. Strictly speaking, as between man and woman, neither should be regarded as superior or inferior."²⁷ For equality to emerge, he urges women to deconstruct what has been fabricated for them. To do this, it is essential for women to refuse to be intimidated by traditional practices and to decline to accept an inferior position in the social order that they have been taught is natural.²⁸ Pursuing his archaeological strategy, Gandhi finds that gender relations have been evolving and that what we have now is not neutral or natural. This can be seen in his commentary regarding polygamy and monogamy.

Draupadi had five husbands at one time and yet has been called "chaste." This is because in that age, just as a man could marry several wives, a woman (in certain regions) could marry several husbands. The code of marriage changes with time and place.²⁹

Just as marriage "codes" change, so do other social "codes," some in ways that are emancipatory and some debilitating to the autonomy of persons. Gandhi, often the traditionalist, turns out to be one of the harshest critics of his own tradition as he digs through what he takes to be its decay and rubble in order to find its core.

We see this again in his critique of untouchability and his excavation of layers of sedimentation to uncover what he takes to be the true Hinduism. His reading of ancient texts reveals to him that although untouchability is sanctioned in contemporary Hindu practice, it "disfigures" the core of Hinduism and "is a morbid growth."³⁰ Holding that Hindu practice roams from its ideals when it embraces untouchability, he calls for its elimination. Part of his reconstructive archaeology is to deny commonly held interpretations in order to propose an alternative that he thinks embodies the original meaning of his own tradition. So, he argues, "Untouchability is

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not only not a part and parcel of Hinduism, but a plague, which it is the burden of every Hindu to combat.³¹

For all of the variety in his many archaeological efforts, the underlying purpose of each of them is to offer emancipatory materials to those at the periphery to enable them to voice their own needs and assert their own dignity.³² He argues that there is an underlying unity in the core of ancient traditions that has been lost over the centuries and needs to be uncovered and practised. He sees the members of different traditions grasping different fragments of the truth, and when they adhere to its core, Gandhi argues, they have materials to judge themselves and others.³³ However, he insists, these fragments, precisely because they are fragments, do not give anyone warrant to impose their truths on others.³⁴

At the same time, Gandhi finds these fragments are sufficiently robust to challenge the fatalism he sees embedded in modernity as well as to confront the fatalism that is spawned by an unreflective acceptance of traditional practices that justify domination. Freed from such fatalism, women, untouchables, and others need not accept the way things are.

Old and New Expressions of Power

For some, the modern state serves as the primary vehicle for emancipation; others find the state oppressive and hold that if confined, civil society can become free. What we find in each of these accounts is the prominence given to the state and the need to make it a focal point of our attention. These are logical arguments stemming from conventional ideas of sovereignty. There can only be one sovereign; some power must stand above all other forms of power and, therefore, should have the ability to command. Gandhi is not content to concentrate on the state as the exclusive site of domination. To be sure, it is an important locale of power for him, but he finds the state sharing power with myriad other repositories of power.³⁵

Gandhi believes the state has been assigned an exaggerated role in contemporary society. It is not merely that the state is pretentious in what it claims for itself but that the attention paid to it deflects us from looking at the many other sites of power. Wanting to move beyond conventional readings of the modern state, he finds that it is part of a much larger phenomenon and cannot be treated as something that stands above modernity.

Gandhi holds that power is embedded in traditional practices such as caste and gender relations as well as in modern economic and social practices and modern claims to knowledge. This theme is prominent in *Hind Swaraj* where Gandhi denies that if only the seat of sovereignty changes from London to New Delhi, then India will be emancipated.³⁶ What is necessary, on his account, is that the institutions of civil society change and the debilitating consequences of modernity be openly challenged.

Gandhi participates in politics, he tells us, "only because politics encircle us today like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out, no matter how much one tries. I wish, therefore, to wrestle with the snake."³⁷ In this way he departs from those who ignore the state or take a fatalistic position that nothing can be done.³⁸ He finds, for example, that the British colonial state cannot be escaped or ignored. But any effective resistance in the name of autonomy, he argues, must do more than take on the coercive state. As important as the state is as a site of power, Gandhi thinks that it represents only a part of the problem. He finds that in the modern world, disciplinary networks have evolved which direct and manage people and deprive them of their autonomy. For Gandhi, disciplinary power does not rely on the visible coercion of conventional state power. From his perspective, modernity coughs up rules that, to be followed, require people to redefine themselves. For him, this reconstructed self accepts the new rules as necessary and takes their construction as appropriate. Modern disciplinary power is so dangerous, according to Gandhi, because it attempts to disguise itself and pretends it is not power. Hiding behind appearances which mask its real nature, disciplinary power departs from state conceptions of power.

Why should individuals not recognize that they are being redefined and disciplined? Gandhi thinks that much of the answer comes with the way discipline is often tied to necessity, that is, to the economy.³⁹ Necessity not only has to do with the ways households meet their elementary needs in order to survive biologically, but today it also has been greatly expanded to include all manner of things that are considered needs.⁴⁰

Gandhi thinks that any social system creates its own unique set of systemic needs layered on top of basic ones. These needs address what it takes to get along in that society. To meet these needs, it is necessary to work: how persons work,⁴¹ how they are rewarded, and what goods they consume or want to consume are important to individuals. He holds that with modernity, needs expand all over the place, and it becomes impossible to satisfy all of them. The explosion of needs stems not only from the burgeoning of systemic needs but also from the materialistic character of modernity which ties identity to a consumption that is never satiated.⁴²

It is not the case that the privileged classes discipline other classes but are not disciplined themselves. Gandhi's critique of modernity holds that those most likely to be disciplined by modernity are those in the modern sectors, accepting the claims of modernity about its humanitarian impulses, its commitment to rationality, its debts to science, and its promise of progress. Those who have been or seek to be integrated in the modern sector find their success depends on their "self-discipline." The "self-discipline" Gandhi has in mind concerns the ways persons redefine themselves to accommodate to modern norms in order to take advantage of as much of the material as of status, advantages that the modern age offers.⁴³

Among the Indians Gandhi targets as falling victim to modern discipline are those who are attempting to insert themselves into the modern sector, such as lawyers in British courts.⁴⁴ Ironically, those outside the orbit of modernity often escape many of its pressures of normalization, but they frequently fall under its coercive power.

Surely, the question can be asked whether modern society is more disciplinary than other societies. Probably not, but modern discipline takes place within the context of freedom. The things we want are seen as free expressions on our part. But are they? Gandhi believes that modern freedom often clouds an understanding of how people are being disciplined and shaped. For him, the order imposed in modern society comes not primarily from the state but from the disciplinary practices that are scattered throughout modern society.

Plurality and Universalism

With modernity, several changes occur: the preferred politics that develops is of a certain sort (democracy as centralized, bureaucratic, representative, and interest-attentive); the norms of modern culture are secular, consumer-oriented, and pleasure-driven; economics rotates around production, efficiency, growth, and consumption; education becomes the acquisition of skills valued in the economy. These changes signal the invasion of traditional and transcendent modes of understanding and acting in the world. For Gandhi, such developments also crush what was once a robust diversity.

What is important about diversity to someone like Gandhi is that much of it makes room for what modernity ignores, namely transcendent ways of thinking about the self. He sees people with a material, biological nature and a transcendent, spiritual nature, and as I have argued elsewhere, Gandhi argues that to be fully human it is necessary to attend to both. For him, transcendence means moving outside oneself, something that requires detachment and results in service to others.⁴⁵ Gandhian transcendence is something anyone is said to be able to achieve, independent of income, education, or religious commitment.⁴⁶ For him, the universalizing materialism of modernity stands in the way of the many different expressions of transcendence that he believes once flourished and are in danger of being lost. He also fears that detachment becomes difficult when the self-referential self, particularly the materially oriented self-referential self, is the primary way people understand themselves.

Gandhi's celebration of transcendence does not require an external standard that purports to be objective and applicable to all situations. Although he believes that real truth exists, he holds that no single creed, tradition, or philosophy grasps the truth in its entirety.⁴⁷ On Gandhi's view, most traditions grasp important fragments of the truth which are translated into local idioms. For him, Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity, in their highly distinctive ways, do this in confronting the raw ego and

providing individuals with a meaning beyond their biological properties.⁴⁸ Believing that every tradition is partial in the sense that it cannot grasp, much less incorporate, the entire truth, Gandhi resists efforts to appropriate dogmatic truth claims by any tradition, including his own, or to use its understanding of the good to claim a privileged status for itself in relation to other traditions.

With modernity, Gandhi fears that many diverse expressions of culture are in danger of disappearing and the rest must explain themselves by reference to modernity. On his account, many different logics carry challenges to modernity, and what I have in mind is not the shaman or magician but such logics that emphasize the relationship of human beings to one another and to their environment and the responsibilities the members of a community have to each other. For Gandhi, this requires moral agents to move away from their material attachments and see themselves as part of an interrelated and interdependent cosmos where all of the parts are equal and united.

Gandhi's Cosmos

Throughout this paper, I have used some conceptual frameworks that Gandhi shares with post-modernism. But these similarities become exhausted after a while, and one place where this is the case concerns Gandhi's view of the cosmos.⁴⁹ Post-modern writers would find that his cosmos looks too much like a *telos*, with its own imperatives, and is unwittingly open to domination. This Gandhi would deny.

For him, the cosmos is ideally characterized by the interdependence and interrelatedness of the parts which simultaneously retain their own integrity and coexist together harmoniously.⁵⁰ These two latter characteristics are what I want to pursue in terms of Gandhi's critique of modernity. Gandhian harmony cannot evolve out of a discipline which seeks to universalize rules and conduct; rather he imagines that any real harmony reflects the rhythm of life with all of its diversity. One thing this requires is that the many aspects of a person's life coexist in some reasonable harmony.⁵¹ This internal rhythm is interrupted when one aspect of our life, such as economics, dominates the other aspects. The diversity within our own lives needs to be safeguarded, and part of Gandhi's quarrel with modernity is that he believes it cancels the multiple needs of individuals in favour of making economic ones primary.⁵²

Gandhi presents his cosmic harmony as something on the horizon, something to aim for. Standing away from us, it remains elusive and, at the same time, is the embodiment of what Gandhi considers to be the highest human aspirations. From his perspective, if all that we have are practicalities and no ideals, we remain bogged down in the world, its captives, as we find how best to adjust and adapt rather than to aspire to take control of our own lives.

The coherence and intelligibility Gandhi finds in his cosmos are shattered in the modern world which offers a series of discreet rules to apply to the many separate and distinctive roles which individuals carry. He fears that when a person's life is splintered by conflicting standards, eventually one or another dominates, and the weaker ones no longer contribute organizing principles for the person. For him, modernity supplies the dominant standard for individual well-being today. The surviving fragments of a tradition roam only in marginal realms of a person's life or live in the shadows of ritual and nostalgia.

Gandhi offers *swaraj* or self-rule as an alternative to modernity, not as an abstraction but as an affirmation of the dignity of ordinary people in the countless, diverse villages of India.⁵³ He sees each community as a minicosmos reflecting the rhythm, cooperation, responsibilities, and opportunities resident in his idealized cosmos. Each community is said to have its own particular mixture of tradition, religion, language, economics, and myriad other properties. In emphasizing each distinctive community as integral parts of the foundation of Indian society, Gandhi opposes one of the most characteristic features of the modern age: its tendency to homogenize.

Gandhi's cosmos is not guided by comprehensive standards which replace diversity and plurality with uniformity. For him, ordinary men and women need to work with familiar materials when they construct a moral life for themselves and meet necessity. The intersection between a (local) tradition and an active, sentient person creates Gandhi's autonomous person, situated with others who share a common life built on mutual respect. To eliminate various local traditions because they do not accord with the grand narrative of modernity is to deny people their familiar identities and assume they can readily accept some unfamiliar, universal construction that coherently covers them and everyone else. This, Gandhi holds, is not possible and efforts to make it so are destined to be cruel.

In his own unique way, Gandhi offers a response to late modernity, whether modernity is characterized by modern science, economics, or culture. He also takes on traditionalists who want to vitalize hierarchical understandings of citizenship and duty as well as depoliticize much that Gandhi wishes to contest. In proposing everyday autonomy in a plural setting as the standard for judgment, rather than abstract standards such as justice or the modern standard of progress, he seeks a society that is open-ended and fluid and whose practices are under constant scrutiny and potential revision. This is why he wants civil disobedience to remain part of his idealized society. It is to be a place where its primary, self-conscious goals speak to the autonomy and equality of everyone and where efforts to deny these goods can be challenged.

With this vision, Gandhi parts company with a major strand of the Enlightenment which exudes a confidence that the good material life will be the good life and the engine of progress will deliver prosperity and

personal fulfilment. For his part, Gandhi disputes these claims and calls attention to the many sites and abuses of power and calls for resistance to domination. In the process, he means to defend the idea that the autonomy of individuals must be the standard with which to judge claims to knowledge and social practices.

Notes and References

1. Both Gandhi and several post-modern writers offer alternative modes of discourse and analysis to the modern paradigm. In this paper I will deploy some conceptual categories used by various post-modern writers to show that the post-modern temper shares much with an unlikely voice, one which talks about love, truth, tradition, and autonomy. In drawing parallels between some post-modern writers and Gandhi, I do not mean to make the two interchangeable or to argue that post-modernism implicitly contains such Gandhian imperatives as love and self-sacrifice any more than I claim that Gandhi can comfortably fit into a thoroughgoing post-modernism.
Then why use some of the post-modern perspective to think about Gandhi's critique of modernity? There are several reasons for embarking on such a discussion. For one, the exercise shows that neither is a totally distinctive language but shares some reading of the modern world and how that world has exhausted itself. Moreover, the exercise demonstrates that the logic of post-modernism about constructiveness and deconstruction does not necessarily lead to the kind of skepticism that characterizes much post-modernism.
2. One of the primary complaints with modernity is that it judges not only the world but itself by its own internally generated standards. For Gandhi, any practice must do more than show it is good or efficient by its own standards.
3. M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 17, p. 92. The edition cited here is *Hind Swaraj* edited by Anthony Parel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
4. *Ibid.*, Chapter 13, p. 71. For a further discussion of Gandhi's selective reliance on modern concepts, see Ronald Terchek, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy* (Lanham: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998), Chapters 2 and 3; Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy* (Norte Dame: Norte Dame University Press, 1989); Anthony Parel, "Introduction" in his *Hind Swaraj and other Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Mahendra Kumar, "Gandhi in the Twenty-first Century" in Anthony Copley and George Paxton, eds, *Gandhi and the Contemporary World* (Chennai: Indo-British Historical Society, 1997); and Thomas Pantham, "Gandhi, Nehru, and Modernity" in Upendra Baxi and Bhikhu Parekh, eds, *Crisis and Change in Contemporary India* (New Delhi: Sage, 1995).
5. *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 5, p. 33.
6. *Ibid.*, Chapter 14, p. 73.

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7. *Ibid.*, Chapter 8, p. 43.
8. *Young India*, 21 March 1928.
9. *Hind Swaraj*, Chapters 9, 11, 12, and 19 and pages 164-79). But he continually makes it clear that he is not opposed to everything modern. Regarding machinery, he says that he rejects it when it ceases "to help the individual and encroaches upon his individuality" (*Young India*, 20 November 1924).
10. See *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 3, p. 24 on the need to be discontented.
11. On Gandhi's views linking science and ethics, see "Ethical Religion," in Raghavan N. Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1973), 2, 51-52.
12. See *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 5 and Anthony Parel's notes in this chapter.
13. Letter to H.S.L. Polak, 14 October 1909 in Raghavan N. Iyer, ed., *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 1, p. 293.
14. Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), p. 275. For extended discussions of Gandhi and Science, see Ashis Nandy, *Traditions, Tyranny, and Utopia* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1987) and Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986).
15. *The Hindu*, 19 March 1925 in Raghavan N. Iyer, ed., *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 1, pp. 310-11. Here and elsewhere, Gandhi shows that he carries his own appreciation of modernity of a certain sort.
16. *The Hindu*, 19 March 1925.
17. *Young India*, 13 November 1924.
18. Gandhi writes that "what may be, therefore, true of Europe is not necessarily true of India. . . [Each nation has its own characteristics and individuality. India has her own; and if we are to find out a true solution for her many ills, we shall have to take all the idiosyncrasies of her constitution into account," Vide *Young India*, 6 August 1925.
19. See M.K. Gandhi, *Constructive Programme* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1941).
20. For Gandhi's discussion of his idealized village as a *municosmos*, see his *India of My Dreams* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1959) and *Rebuilding Our Villages* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1952).
21. There is a vast literature on this subject, ranging from Marx to Foucault and from Tocqueville to MacIntyre. Rather than picking and choosing which of the various alternatives to follow, I plan simply to build on the overall arguments that this body of critiques offers.
22. See *Young India*, 25 August 1920; and *Harijan*, 21 July 1940 for examples of defying fate.
23. Gandhi's critique of modernity cannot be understood apart from his critique of tradition. He is no nostalgic communitarian who seeks relief from the present by escaping into the past. As he understands matters, domination is no exclusive characteristic of either the past or the present and needs to be exposed and resisted whenever it asserts itself.

24. According to Gandhi, sacred texts "suffer from a process of double distillation. Firstly, they come through a human prophet, and then commentaries of interpreters. Nothing in them comes from God directly." Vide *Harijan*, 5 December 1936.
25. See Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1967), pp. 46-50, 53-61, and 65-71. Also see Yogesh Chaddha, *Gandhi: A Life* (New York, John Wiley, 1997), pp. 218-25.
26. See Ronald Terchek and Nitis Das Gupta, "Gandhi and the Autonomous Woman," *Journal of Gandhian Studies*, 1998.
27. "Talks to Ashram Women," 1926 in Raghavan N. Iyer, ed., *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 3, p. 394.
28. See *Harijan*, 24 February 1940.
29. "Talks to Ashram Women," 1926, referred to earlier.
30. *Harijan*, 20 April 1934.
31. M.K. Gandhi, *From Yeravda Mandir* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1935), p. 47. As Gandhi understands matters, "Caste, if you will, is undoubtedly a drag upon Hindu progress, and untouchability . . . is a weedy growth fit only to be weeded out. If I again interpret the Hindu spirit rightly, all life is absolutely equal and one." Vide *Young India*, 20 October 1927.
32. See his advice to women that they must be in charge of their own emancipation in "Talks to Ashram Women."
33. Krishna Kripalani, *All Men Are Brothers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 72-73.
34. He reports that "After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (1) all religions are true; (2) all religions have some error in them" (*All Men Are Brothers*, edited by Krishna Kripalani [New York: Columbia University Press, 1958], 60).
35. When some people talk about power and Gandhi, they discuss his theory of the power of love. Here, I want to take up another aspect of power in his writings. I do not mean to discount the importance of love in Gandhi's conceptualization of power. See Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi's Political Philosophy*; Ronald Terchek, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy*; and Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*.
36. See *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 19, p. 198.
37. *Young India*, 23 May 1920.
38. Gandhi regards the rise of the nation-state and its accompanying bureaucracy as a threat to the power of the periphery. For a further discussion of Gandhian politics, see Ronald Terchek, "Gandhi's Democratic Theory," in Thomas Pantham and Kenneth Deutsch, eds, *Political Thought of Modern India* (New Delhi: Sage, 1986).
39. In this way, he departs from most post-modern writers who tend to devalue the economy.
40. Gandhi holds that modernity feeds on the proclivity of the biological nature of human beings always to crave more. On his account, "The mind is a restless bird; the more it gets the more it wants and still remains

- unsatisfied. The more we indulge our passions the more unbridled they become." Vide *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 13.
41. Gandhi is as interested in production as distribution. He argues that if production or work is degrading and thwarts autonomy, then it is not good enough to concentrate on distributive policies. See *Young India*, 2 July 1931.
42. He complains: "The distinguishing characteristic of modern civilization is an infinite multiplicity of human wants." Vide *Young India*, 2 June 1927.
43. He complains that the British "spend their days in luxury or in making a bare living and retire at night thoroughly exhausted. In this state of affairs, I cannot understand when they can" transcend their worlds of work and consumption. Vide *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 9, p. 389.
44. See *Hind Swaraj*, Chapter 11.
45. Gandhian detachment is a prelude to action, not an escape from the world. See Ronald Terchek, *Gandhi: Struggling for Autonomy*, pp. 29-33.
46. According to Gandhi, "God is Truth and Love; God is ethics and morality; God is fearlessness. . . . God is conscience. He is even the atheism of the atheist." Vide *Young India*, 5 March 1925.
47. Gandhi holds that all "religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality" (*Young India*, 24 May 1924). He returns to this theme in *Harijan*, 7 March 1929. Also see, Ronald Terchek, "Gandhi and Moral Autonomy," *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 13, March 1992, and Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 19.
48. Gandhi announces that he is "a Muslim, a Hindu, a Buddhist, a Christian, a Jew, a Parsi." On another occasion, he asks, "Why blaspheme God by fighting over different media? Koran, Bible, Talmud, Avesta, or Gita? . . . Why make of books and formulas so many fetters to enslave rather than to unify?" See G.N. Dhawan, *The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1951, p. 9). Also see Joan Bondurant, *Conquest of Violence*, p. 152.
49. Gandhi finds that every living being has a role in the continual cycles of life and must be respected. On his reading, human beings have duties and responsibilities in the cosmic cycle. One reason is that every individual is a debtor, not only taking from nature but also in living in a particular community with its own language, customs, divisions of labour, and patterns of cooperation and support. As such, individuals are said to owe debates to the many persons who contribute to their well-being.
50. See V.R. Mehta, *Foundations of Indian Political Thought* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1992).
51. See Bhikhu Parekh, "Is Gandhi Still Relevant?" in Anthony Copley and George Paxton, *Gandhi and the Contemporary World*.
52. The multiple needs of individuals are not stationary, according to Gandhi, but change as people move into new stages of their lives.
53. See *Harijan*, 20 January 1940.

Civilizational Crisis and Beyond

Dashrath Singh

MAN, SOCIETY, AND nature are facing such an unprecedented predicament in the present "satanic civilization" that their better existence has become impossible, nay, the existence itself has reached the throes of annihilation. The civilization which encircles us is essentially materialistic. Science, heavy industries, commercialism, market economy, excessive reliance on dehumanized technology, city life, consumerism, power-oriented politics and division in every walk of social life are its main components. There is no room for religion, morality, spirituality, and self-restraint in it and, consequently, the inner life of man is being eroded in the absence of proper nourishment. Indiscriminate "rape of the earth," environmental pollution, growing warming of the atmosphere, self-alienation, direct and indirect forms of violence, and mass unemployment have resulted in all-encompassing peacelessness in modern society.

We are facing a wide range of crisis engulfing each and every aspect of life. In spite of the materialistic pursuits, masses are suffering from abject poverty and unemployment and hence there is also an economic crisis. The world is hankering after development but the society is being diseased of maldevelopment. There is crisis of ecological imbalance. Human aspect of our personality is waning every day. There is a moral crisis resulting in the crisis of character. The youngsters badly face the crisis of values to be opted in life. There is spiritual crisis or crisis of faith badly affecting human relations. But, above all, there is only one crisis and that is civilizational crisis adversely affecting our cultural life. In this paper, I shall first clarify the constituting concepts of "civilizational crisis" and then try to discuss the proper way to go beyond it.

The Meaning of Civilization

The concept of civilization is very complex. It has its different uses and definitions given by historians, sociologists, anthropologists, and

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philosophers. Literally, "civilization" means making of city and city life. The Hindi equivalent is "Sabhyata" which means ways and manners of entering into sabha—the congregation of civilized people or royal court. Both the meanings refer to the mode of behaviour of certain high-class people. Most of the anthropologists, therefore, use the term in the sense of "a special type of culture—namely "a complex and high culture." Civilization, to them, is "a culture of people who live in cities" and a people means people living together according to accepted customs, that is, of acting civilly.³ However, within the last 150 years, the term has assumed a different and wider connotation. Presently the term refers to "achievement in such aesthetics and intellectual pursuits as architecture, painting, literature, sculpture, music, philosophy, and science and to the success which a people has in establishing control over its human and physical environment." Thus, broadly speaking, the term "civilization" refers to (i) the concept of progress or development; and (ii) a certain mode of life which binds the people of a group, or nation, or international community. In fact, a mode of life is interlinked with the concept of progress. As is our idea of progress, so becomes our life-style. Both are so interrelated that they cannot be separated from each other.

In using the term "civilizational crisis," we mean "civilization" in the sense of modern civilization which believes in material progress as the only mark of civilization. In the thread of material progress, it tries to weave out the individual as well as social development. A bird's-eye view of history will show that modern civilization flourished with the growth of commerce, industries, and science and technology which led A.N. Whitehead to remark that commerce is the beginning of civilization. All the facilities of commerce and industries are available in the city and hence is regarded as the corner and symbol of civilization. Herbert S. Muller rightly remarked: "Although civilization has rested on the labour of village world, its history is the history of Babylon, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Constantinople, Paris, and London."⁵ Visualizing the materialistic tone, Mahatma Gandhi said: "The word 'civilization' means that people living in it make bodily welfare the object of life."⁶ On the parameter of material prosperity a people is marked civilized or uncivilized resulting in class distinction in society. "The greater the extent to which a people produces aesthetic and intellectual works of high merit and provides physical and social securities for its members, the more civilized that people is, and, conversely, the less a people realizes either qualitatively or quantitatively any of these tenets of civilization, the less civilized it is."⁷

Sometimes, "civilization" and "culture" are used synonymously. In Indian philosophy "culture" and "civilization" are used as identical. Mahatma Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi very candidly used them in an identical sense.⁸ However, in Western social sciences, both the terms are distinguished from one another. According to the Western anthropologists and behaviour scientists, a culture is the behaviour pattern of a group of

people. Kroeber and Kluckhohn write: "Culture consists of patterns, explicit and implicit, of and for symbols, constituting the distinctive achievements of human groups, including their embodiments in artifacts. The essential core of culture consists of traditional ideas and specially their attached values." Thus being the behaviour pattern of a group, culture is applicable only for a group, not for an individual. But in Indian philosophy, culture is applicable to both individual and society, facts and values, inner and outer qualities of man. Gandhi talked of "culture of mind," "culture of heart," and inner and outer culture.

Inaugurating the Indian Council of Cultural Relations in 1950, Jawaharlal Nehru said: "Does culture mean some inner growth in man? Of course it must. Does it mean the way he behaves with others? Certainly it must. Does it mean the capacity to understand other person? I suppose so. Does it mean the capacity to make yourself understood by the other person? I suppose so. It means all¹⁰ that. To Nehru, "culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit."¹¹ There is national culture and culture of the age. "But there is something that is deeper than national culture and that is human culture."¹² In fact, culture comprehends all the good aspects of our consciousness. Sri Aurobindo holds: "The culture of people may be roughly described as the expression of a consciousness of life which formulates itself in three aspects. There is a side of thought, of ideal, of upward will and the soul's aspiration, there is a side of creative self-expression and appreciative aesthetics, intelligence and imagination; and there is a side of practical and outward formulation."¹³

Thus we find the following relations between the two concepts:

- (i) From the Indian point of view, "civilization" and "culture" both are identical and all-inclusive of our consciousness.
- (ii) From the Western point of view, they are different and yet related with each other. Taken into account the ancient Western meaning of civilization, it becomes a type of culture and therefore is included in the concept of culture. Sometimes a distinction is made by describing civilization as external progress and means of achievements and culture as internal enlightenment and end in itself. However, it cannot be taken to be true as reality is the whole and hence is futile to draw a line between the internal and external and between means and end.
- (iii) Used in the modern sense, civilization is the whole and culture its parts. Civilization is the symbol of the whole of material and social progress, whereas culture refers to the behavioural and lifestyle aspect of civilization.
- (iv) It is helped that "civilization" is a concept which is related to change and modernity, whereas culture is concerned with tradition and continuity. But this distinction is not tenable, as both being

social phenomena are subject of tradition and continuity, change and modernity.

- (v) Rene Dubois, one of the pioneers of environmental studies, distinguishes "civilization" from "culture" by using "civilization" in the singular when referring to the values that can be shared and are increasingly shared by most people irrespective of origin, race, or religion; in contrast, "culture" in the plural to designate the body of values, ideas, and beliefs which are characteristics of a particular group.¹⁴ Mourad Wahaba also shares this view. This distinction seems to be true albeit in the ideal or normative sense that both civilization and cultures are one. From the aforesaid distinctions, it may be concluded that civilization covers comparatively a larger space and time while cultures are localized. Most of the international communities, developed or undeveloped, believe in one and only one civilization which is materialistic, though their cultures vary due to different geography and traditions. Civilization is measured in the scale of age but cultures in the scale of period.

Civilizational Crisis

All the crises experienced in the modern world can be explained in terms of civilizational crisis. Therefore, in a sense, it is metaphysical in nature. To make it more clear, it can be said that our wrong and inadequate notion of progress or development is the cause of crisis in every walk of life. Theories of development, capitalistic, or socialistic, or Nehruvian, are one-sided as they are essentially materialistic. No development models believes in all-round development, that is, moral, spiritual, and human development. Consequently development becomes maldevelopment causing multiple crises in modern society. The maldevelopment disintegrated man, society, and nature, and brought human civilization to a crossroad. For the natural growth of civilization, a balanced and harmonious relationship between different aspects of life is essential, failing which predicamental situations arise in the entire activities of the so-called civilized people.

The present civilization is responsible for the "divide within social settings such as family, village, town, ethnic groups, and communities." It has created splits in them and has eroded communitarian life. K.D. Gangrade rightly remarks: "The present political and development process are acting as catalyst of a collective decadence. A society which lays emphasis on the accumulation of power than on the restraints, on wealth than on morality, on knowledge than on humanism, and on demagoguery rather than on authentic sharing and participation in the process of change and development is bound to pay a heavy price for lack of collective wisdom."¹⁵

The damaging fissures in society are not due to outward forces but are pregnant within the civilization, causing serious crisis in social life.

The morality and spirituality of a social being depend upon the structure of society he lives in as well as the philosophy and end which a society seeks to realise. With the split and violent structures and materialistic and utilitarian goal, the present civilization cannot lead humanity ahead towards peace and happiness. It is bound to create a moral and spiritual chaos in human society. Today we see multiple faces of violence, unrest, distrust, and loss of faith in interpersonal and inter-group relations. Corruption and immorality are the special features of the developed and developing societies. All this proves the decadence of higher moral and spiritual values—the very life breath of a progressive society.

Though civilization is committed to rapid economic growth through industrialisation, it is incompetent to deliver even material well-being to all. Firstly, there is no logical connection between economic growth and alleviation of poverty. Joan Robinson rightly pointed out: "A growth in wealth is not at all the same thing as reducing poverty. . . . As growth goes on at the top, more and more families are thrown out at the bottom. Absolute misery grows while wealth increase."¹⁶ In fact, affluence can never guarantee equal and equitable distribution of income and wealth. Therefore, despite the significant economic growth, most of the people in the world are living in a state of grinding poverty. Secondly, the present model of economic development contains inherent contradictions and hence is never a sustainable model of development. The economic development based absolutely on heavy industries and non-renewable energy as well as abuse of land can never last long. From some corner, efforts are being made to make it sustainable with the help of renewable and non-exhaustible energy. But it is not a solution of the real problem. In the true sense of the term, a sustainable development refers to human development which is lacking in the existing model. Economic development is the means to develop all the whole faculty of human beings which is possible only through participatory involvement of the people in economic activities. A sustainable development is really based on its moral, spiritual, and just social foundations. Dr R.P. Mishra rightly remarks: "Sustainability is multifaceted. When seen in parts and outside the context of the whole, it loses its real meaning."¹⁷ The unjust and unsustainable economic development is, in fact, economic crisis or crisis in development caused by modern civilization itself. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee deserves our hearty congratulations for suggesting a global dialogue on the concept of development in his speech before the U.S. Congress on 14 September last year.

Modern civilization has not only affected our socio-economic and ethico-spiritual system adversely, but the whole of economic system also. The greedy civilization has depleted earth and polluted the whole of atmosphere, lithosphere, and hydrosphere and is also responsible for the degradation of biosphere. Many species of animals and birds of the planet are diminishing day by day. There is a danger of greenhouse effect "and

ozone holes in the atmosphere resulting in excess warming and raising of sea levels." The all-round pollution has generated many types of disease in man and other species. In short, there is crisis in Nature.

The crisis in Nature is due to a wrong relationship established between man and Nature by modern civilization. The Indian wisdom is to live friendly with Nature like a family member. But civilization—the product of Western wisdom—regards Nature as a foe and the object to be vanquished and exploited for the pleasure of man. The hedonist civilization went to such an extent in exploitation of Nature that it has become diseased and is proceeding towards bankruptcy rapidly. No doubt, the environmentalists are involved in seeking solution of the problem but they are medicines of the ailments, not the cure of the disease. All problems of Nature are in fact problems with the civilization and ecological crisis is fundamentally civilizational crisis. Unless and until the efforts go beyond civilization, the crisis in Nature will go deeper and deeper and the very existence on the planet will meet a disaster.

Civilizational crisis is also the cause of cultural crisis in society. It is pertinent to refer here to the difference between civilizational crisis and cultural crisis. The civilizational crisis means the wrong in the very concept of civilization which results in all-round crises in society, while cultural crisis means the crisis in human behaviour, style of living, and in all behavioural institutions etc. In a cultural crisis, there is loss of spirit in human personality and lack of purpose in social institutions. Love, compassion, cooperation, and feeling to serve others are some of the qualities of soul which serve as a cementing force in society and liberating force in human life. But these are overshadowed in the dazzling materialism of civilization. The materialistic values have become so powerful that even an aspirant of morality and noble actions fails in finding out the suitable path of life. The purpose of politics is to give good management to people, the purpose of education is to transform the whole of human personality, and the purpose of religion is to unite with the transcendental values. But politics, education, and religion have become meaningless in the unlimited hunger of material pleasure in the present civilization. In fact, all the crises are symptoms and civilization is a disease. Knowing the symptoms we must try to get out of the disease and enjoy the happiness of all-round peaceful life.

How to Go Beyond the Crisis?

The crucial problem before modern man is how to get rid of this monster civilization? Civilization is not like a cloak which can be put on and put off at wish. It is a product of a long process and hence its containment needs a wise step with firm belief and enduring patience. One cannot come out of civilization at once and all of a sudden. It would be as suicidal as jumping out from an running express train. If we want to disembark from the train,

we will have to wait for the next station or request the guard and the driver to stop the train. Similarly if we sincerely want to get out of the present civilization, we should have the vision of a true civilization and leaders of the world in different fields, that is, politics, economics, religion, and society as a whole will have to come forward. The leaders would first have to live themselves in accordance with an alternative true civilization and then disseminate the ideas among their followers to motivate them, as Mahatma Gandhi did.

But the question is what is a true civilization to be cultivated to avert the crisis. To me it seems, Mahatma Gandhi is the beacon light in this regard. Due to the space limit, it is not possible here to discuss the Gandhian principles in details. In brief, it can be said that his ideas of decentralization of all kinds of powers, labour, and mass-oriented economic growth based on eco-friendly technology and purity of means, simple living and high thinking as the motto of individual and social life, all-round development and liberation of human personality and society, synthesis of science and spirituality in different walks of life, life-affirming and dynamic spirituality, cultural mutuality and dialogues, ethical religions and appliance of moral power or soul-force in resolving all kinds of conflicts will have to be zealously followed. These principles are not only the objects of noble thoughts to be widely disseminated but also the guiding principles of restructuring socio-economic and political structures of the present-day society.

If needed, the political leaders of the world should meet together and discuss the model of a new civilization in the line of Gandhian principles and also build a consensus on implementing strategies. The conscious people of the world should come forward to educate people in a new civilization.

Thus, with the help of Gandhian principles and people's education along with the nonviolent structures of society, we may smoothly go beyond the present-day civilizational crisis. Toynbee, the eminent historian, rightly remarked: "It is becoming clear that a chapter which had a Western beginning will have to have an Indian ending if it is not to end in the self-destruction of human race."¹⁸

Notes and References

1. Clide Kluckohn, *Culture and Behaviour* (New York: Free Press Paperback, The Macmillan Co., 1962), p. 20.
2. *Ibid.*
3. Shepard B. Clough, *The Rise and Fall of Civilization* (New York: Columbia University Press Paperback, 1961), p. 3.
4. *Ibid.*

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5. Herbert J. Muller, *The Uses of the Past* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 54.
6. M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1994), 9th reprint, p. 32.
7. Shepard B. Clough, *The Rise and Fall of Civilization*, p. 3.
8. Both Mahatma Gandhi in his *Hind Swaraj* and Sri Aurobindo in his *The Foundations of Indian Culture* use the term "civilization" identically.
9. Clyde Kluckhohn, *Culture and Behaviour*, p. 73.
10. N.N. Chatterjee, *Nehru's Thoughts on National Topics* (New Delhi: Government of India, Publications Division, 1987), p. 65.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 64.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 63.
13. Sri Aurobindo, *The Foundations of Indian Culture* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1959), p. 59.
14. Mourad Wahba, ed., *Cultures in Conflict or in Dialogue* (Cairo: Proceedings of the Third Afro-Asian Philosophy Conference, 1990), p. 108.
15. Ramjee Singh, ed., *Gandhi and the Future of Humanity* (Varanasi: Gandhian Institute of Studies, 1997), p. 84.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
18. Ramjee Singh, *Gandhi and the Twenty-First Century* (New Delhi: Peace Publishers, 1993), p. 86.



Of Modern-Day *Karmayogis* and *Bodhisattvas*: Gandhi's Spiritual Politics and Engaged Buddhism

Richard L. Johnson

THE FOUNDERS OF Theosophy, Colonel Henry Steel Olcott and Madame Helena Blavatsky, arrived in Ceylon in 1880 and "knelt before a Buddhist priest at a temple in Galle and performed the ceremony of "taking *pansil*"—the five lay precepts of undertaking to refrain from killing, lying, stealing, intoxicants, and sexual misconduct. They repeated the vows in Pali, as well as the refuge in Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha, before a large crowd."¹ Colonel Olcott and his protégé, Don David Hevavitharana, who later changed his name to Anagarika Dharmapala, initiated "the spirit and substance of the religious activism we call 'socially engaged Buddhism'."² Educated in Christian missionaries, Dharmapala returned to Buddhism under the tutelage of Olcott and Blavatsky. He went to India in 1891 where he worked ceaselessly to renovate the ancient Buddhist shrine at Bodhi Gaya, the site of Buddha's enlightenment. Founder of the Mahabodhi Society in Ceylon in 1874 as well as the Sinhala Baudhaya in 1906, an influential Sinhalese newspaper, Dharmapala is respected today by Sri Lankans as the founder of socially engaged Buddhism in his native land.

Theosophists offered the young Dharmapala ways not only to affirm his own religious traditions but also to renew them by bringing in a social and political dimension to his faith. Indeed, Gananath Obeyesekere has called Olcott's and Dharmapala's Buddhist reforms "*Protestant Buddhism*" because "(a) . . . many of its norms and organizational forms are historical derivatives from Protestant Christianity. (b) . . . It is a protest *against* Christianity and its associated Western political dominance prior to independence."³ Theosophists were influential as well in Mohandas K. Gandhi's early religious and social-political development. He was an

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associate member of the Theosophical Society in London, several of his European co-workers in South Africa were Theosophists, and he became a representative there of the Esoteric Christian Union, an offshoot of the Theosophical Society founded by Edward Maitland. Theosophists were instrumental in founding the Indian National Congress, and the fiery Annie Besant, converted from socialism to Theosophy by Madame Blavatsky, was the major leader of the Indian Home Rule movement before Gandhi took the lead in 1919.

In South Africa, Gandhi read a number of Hindu, Jain, Christian, and Muslim texts—ancient and modern—and simultaneously he worked for the social and political uplift of Indians there. These texts, and the example of the Avatars of these religions, showed him a way to bring together his work with other Indians and his devotion to a spiritual path. He found in the *Gita* an answer to the age-old problem concerning the relationship between action in the world and spiritual liberation:

Renunciation of fruits of action . . . is the centre round which the *Gita* is woven. This renunciation is the central sun, round which devotion, knowledge, and the rest revolve like planets. The body is likened to a prison. There must be action where there is a body. . . . And yet all religions proclaim that it is possible for man, by treating the body as a temple of God, to attain freedom. Every action is tainted, be it ever so trivial. How can the body be made the temple of God? In other words, how can one be free from . . . the taint of sin? The *Gita* has answered the question in decisive language: "By desireless action: by renouncing fruits of action; by dedicating all activities to God, that is, by surrendering oneself to Him body and soul."⁴

Spiritual liberation, *moksha*, comes then not from renouncing the world but rather from renouncing the fruits of action in the world. According to the *Gita*, a *karmayogi* is a person who acts without desire, without attachment, in a spirit of sacrificial, selfless service. As Gandhi wrote, "it has been my endeavour, as also that of some companions, to reduce to practice the teaching of the *Gita* as I have understood it."⁵ He believed fervently that a person seeking liberation must dedicate himself to *karmayoga*.

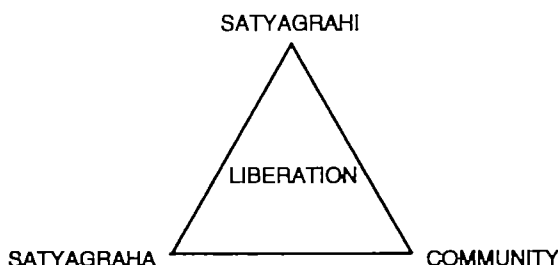
As he read and as he sought to liberate Indians from South African oppression, he developed *Satyagraha*—literally clinging to Divine Truth—as a modern form of *karmayoga*. Gandhi chose to coin a new term because he was convinced that although the religious bases of his practices were "as old as the hills," his development of a social liberation movement was a major innovation, necessary because of new forms of oppression developed in Western civilization. He was improving "spiritual politics,"⁶ a synthesis of age-old spiritual insights along with traditional and modern—indeed highly experimental—forms of social liberation. The central goal was difficult, and it took years to develop: to remain selfless and sacrificial in the midst of service to others, as the *Gita* had shown, and to utilize old and new social structures within the context of a social liberation movement.

Traditional and new forms were brought together—the Indian extended family, the *ashram*, the Indian village, the spinning-wheel, passive resistance, educational and health reform, ecumenical religious practices, the Constructive Programme, modern journalism, radio, political action, social organization, and leadership—into a method and a way of life that ultimately shook the most powerful empire in the world.

I have argued elsewhere that Gandhian *Satyagraha* has often been misinterpreted especially in the West, as a morally—not necessarily a spiritually—based form of nonviolence, but in fact Gandhi stated often that *Satyagraha* was *political* and *spiritual*, spiritual politics. *Satyagraha* is a spiritual discipline, “experiments in the spiritual field,”⁷ but it is often interpreted as nonviolent theory and/or practice shorn of its spiritual dimension. Therefore I choose to use the term “spiritual politics” as the primary term for *Satyagraha* in English to emphasize that Gandhi always sought to bring spirituality to bear on the political process. He understood politics in the broadest sense to include all aspects of socio-political life.

Many modern social activists, including engaged Buddhists, have been inspired by Gandhi’s life. Indeed, Gandhi’s spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism seem to me to be strikingly similar forms of engaged spirituality. Although some useful comments have been made about similarities between Gandhi and engaged Buddhists, it is surprising that no research to date has focussed primarily on the extent to which Gandhi and a wide range of engaged Buddhists—the Dalai Lama of Tibet, Thich Nhat Hanh of Vietnam, A.T. Ariyaratne of Sri Lanka, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Sulak Sivaraksa of Thailand, Maha Ghosananda of Cambodia, Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, Daisaku Ikeda of Japan, and many others—have created consonant social liberation movements. I would like to compare and contrast what I consider to be the basic structure of Gandhi’s spiritual politics and of engaged Buddhism and to place both within the broader context of engaged spirituality.

In South Africa, Gandhi developed spiritual politics, a practice of personal and social liberation, based on the soul force of the individual *Satyagrahi*, his/her connection to the Indian community, and the principles of *Satyagraha*, as shown in the following diagram:⁸



It is important to recognize that for Gandhi spiritual politics is possible

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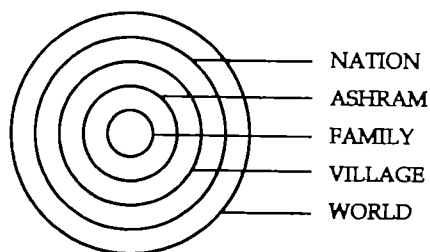
only when the individual, the community, and fundamental principles are in harmony. In practice, such harmonious blending is very difficult to achieve, but he was convinced that the ideal was sound and that, with persistent effort, it could be approached.

I do not think that any leader in the twentieth century had a more profound faith in the power of the individual to effect socio-political change than Gandhi. As he stated of the past, "history shows that all reforms have begun with one person,"⁹ and of the future possibilities, "even a few true *Satyagrahis* would suffice to bring us freedom."¹⁰ His widely-known statement, "my life is its own message,"¹¹ expressed his faith that a *Satyagrahi* must strive to live each moment as an example of spiritual politics.

The origin of spiritual politics was for Gandhi the individual soul which dwells in *every* human being: "The average individual's soul force is any day the most important thing. The political form is but a concrete expression of that soul force."¹² To be sure, as a result of an individual's attachments to the world of *maya* (illusion), his or her soul force is not fully realized. But it is possible, indeed necessary, to strive through lifetimes to develop one's soul force.

One of Gandhi's most significant contributions to humanity was his concerted effort to join the liberation of the individual soul to the liberation of the community. As he wrote to Darbari Sadhu in 1932, "you seem to believe . . . that physical activity prevents or hinders us from . . . the progress of our inward purification. . . . My experience is the opposite. . . . Hence the degree of inward purification can be judged mainly by the purity of our work."¹³ For a *Satyagrahi*, inner work and outer work are two sides of the same coin.

Coupled with his belief in an individual's soul force was his belief in the power of a unified community. He worked tirelessly to knit the Indian community of some 20,000 souls in South Africa into a strong and connected whole, and the success of the movement there rested largely on that strength and connection. It was, of course, quite another thing to unify 300 million souls in India, but that was Gandhi's aim. In South Africa and India, his understanding of interlocking communities within the greater whole was crucial for the successes he achieved in his life. He envisioned, and worked towards the embodiment of, concentric circles of community from the family, the *ashram*, the village, and the nation to the whole world:



As a child, Gandhi experienced and loved the extended Indian family, and he imbibed the belief in family as the model for all of life: "In India we are taught to consider the whole universe as one family."¹⁴ He was impatient with those who believed that they could achieve the liberation of the nation without providing proper support for their own families.¹⁵

In South Africa and India, the *ashram* emerged as Gandhi's model for social change. He established *ashrams* so that "complete harmony with *dharma* may prevail everywhere,"¹⁶ not only in the *ashrams* themselves. An *ashram* was a "great school" in which *Satyagrahis* learnt to transform themselves and then to transform society as a whole. As Mark Thomson has stated in his *Gandhi and His Ashrams*,

the ashrams Gandhi established served as laboratories where he and his colleagues experimented with nonviolence as an alternative way of life. In these small monastic communities of men and women living according to absolute vows he sought to lay the ground work for an egalitarian social organization and economy, and to develop an educational system that reflected the Indian genius. The ashrams provided the economic and moral support as well as fostering the discipline and awareness necessary for their members to sustain grassroot civil disobedience. . . . He believed that ashramic life, based on mutuality, simplicity, and hard work, would nurture an asceticism that could be channelled through positive action to reform society.¹⁷

His ashrams were crucial to the success of his *Satyagraha* campaigns, particularly the Great March of 1913 in South Africa and the Salt March of 1930 in India. Ashrams were a vital refuelling station and staging ground for spiritual politics.

However, in Gandhi's vision of ideal society, progressive and egalitarian villages were the core unit: "In this structure composed of innumerable villages, there will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. Life . . . will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual ready to perish for the villages."¹⁸

Gandhi believed that his service to India was simultaneously a service to the world. He saw life as a process of sacrifice from the individual to the group, the nation, and the whole: "We must sacrifice ourselves in the interest of the family, the family must do so for the nation, and the nation for the world."¹⁹ His influence on many leaders of nonviolent movements of the twentieth century confirms his belief that his work served the world.

GANDHI BELIEVED THAT Divine Truth and Love were the core of all religions. He wrote that Buddha "taught us to defy appearance and trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love. . . . He lived what he taught."²⁰

It was Gandhi's firm conviction that humans could only experience the divine unity of existence through selfless service to others, not only humans but all sentient beings:

The purpose of life is undoubtedly to know oneself. We cannot do it unless we learn to identify ourselves with all that lives. The sum-total of that life is God. Hence the necessity of realizing God living within everyone of us. The instrument of this knowledge is boundless selfless service.²¹

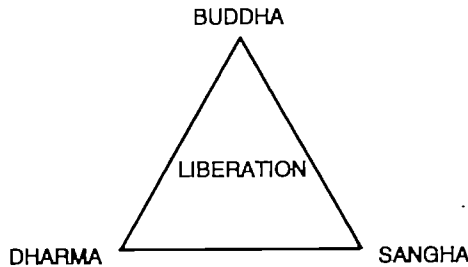
Gandhi's Religion of Service was his bridge between the individual and the whole: "Personal service when it merges into universal service is the only service worth doing. All else is rubbish."²² He based his belief in service on the *Gita*:

The *Gita* contains the gospel of *karma* or work, the gospel of *bhakti* or devotion and the gospel of *jñani* or knowledge. Life should be a harmonious whole of all three. But the gospel of service is the basis of all, and what can be more necessary for those who want to serve the country than that they begin with the chapter enunciating the gospel of work? But you must approach it with the five necessary equipments, viz., *ahimsa* (nonviolence), *satya* (truth), *Brahmacharya* (celibacy), *aparigraha* (non-possession), and *asteya* (non-stealing).²³

Gandhi the *karmayogi* interpreted work in its connection with knowledge and devotion as service. He interpreted *Brahmacharya* in its "wider definition" as an attempt to "control all the . . . organs,"²⁴ not merely as sexual continence. Such an attempt is certainly essential for a *karmayogi* because without control of one's organs, one could not detach oneself from the ego, and "there is violence always in the attachment to the ego."²⁵ Non-possession and non-stealing are directly related to Gandhi's vow of voluntary poverty and to his critique of capitalism. He believed ownership of property to be an illusion—death shows that we do not even own our bodies. And "ownership" of more than what one needs is stealing. His concept of trusteeship of wealth flows naturally from non-possession and non-stealing. "Accumulation of capital is theft, as many socialists have asserted. And Gandhi's "socialism," he believed, came directly from the *Gita*.²⁶

AFTER YEARS OF reading Gandhi and seeking to make his spiritual politics the basis for my life, I began to read more and more about engaged Buddhism. Many engaged Buddhists, especially His Holiness the Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh, have delved deeply into the Buddha sutras and have found ways to make Buddhism a vibrant blending of personal and social liberation. Since they have been forced into exile, both of these monastically trained men have engaged in spiritualizing the political in many ways that seem to me strikingly similar to Gandhi's work. The Dalai Lama, as the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet, embodies engaged Buddhism to millions of people all over the world. Nhat Hanh, the Vietnamese Zen Master, coined the term "engaged Buddhism" and has made a profound impact on many in the East and in the West. As we

examine their writings, essential parallels between engaged Buddhism and Gandhi's spiritual politics emerge.



In Buddhism, the three refuges (also known as the three jewels or gems) are foundational: the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha. Engaged Buddhists, unlike many other Buddhists, make social activism and integral part of their practice, but engaged Buddhists also express homage to the three refuges. The following diagram, parallel to the triangle above describing Gandhi's spiritual politics, suggests the relationship among the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha within engaged Buddhism.

In a chapter in his widely-read *Being Peace*, Nhat Hanh defines the three gems: "Buddha, the awakened one; Dharma, the way of understanding and living; and Sangha, the community that lives in harmony and awareness."²⁷ He believes in the interconnectedness of the three gems, as Gandhi believed in the interconnection of the individual *Satyagrahi*, the Indian community, and the universal principles of *Satyagraha*. Nhat Hanh emphasizes that all three gems must be *embodied*, made actual in the lives of human beings:

If we look closely, the three gems are actually one. In each of them, the other two are already there. In Buddha, there is Buddhahood, there is the Buddha today. In Buddha there is the Dharma body because without the Dharma body, he could not have become a Buddha. In the Buddha there is the Sangha body because he had breakfast with the Bodhi tree, with the other trees, and birds and environment. In a meditation centre, we have a Sangha body, Sanghakaya, because the way of understanding and compassion is practiced there. Therefore the Dharma body is present, the way, the teaching is present. But the teaching cannot become real without the life and body of each of us. So the Buddhakaya is also present. If Buddha and Dharma are not present, it is not a Sangha. Without you, the Buddha is not real, it is just an idea.²⁸

It is characteristic of engaged Buddhists that they seek to embody the Three Gems, which is *being peace*.

According to Nhat Hanh, "we are all Buddhas."²⁹ The Dalai Lama explains: "In the Buddhist tradition, each being possesses . . . Buddha nature. We can all become a Buddha. In our deepest nature we are all equal to the Buddha."³⁰ Sallie King explains that "Buddha nature . . . is naturally and spontaneously compassionate, selfless and altruistic."³¹ Nhat Hanh, the

Dalai Lama, and other engaged Buddhists focus on the *bodhisattva* tradition of Buddhism in which, as Queen states, “service becomes, not the by-product of self-cultivation, but the means to it, the very manifestation of Buddhahood.”³² The Dalai Lama is considered to be “an incarnation of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteshvara.”³³

The Bodhisattva “task of liberating all sentient beings”³⁴ is the foundation of engaged Buddhists’ attempt to liberate human society and the environment from all that hinders the unfoldment of the three gems. The Dalai Lama believes that “our every act has a universal dimension,”³⁵ that “if we change internally—disarm ourselves by dealing with our negative thoughts and emotions—we can literally change the whole world.”³⁶ Queen maintains correctly that “Gandhi’s worldview was deeply compatible with the altruism of the Mahayana Bodhisattva tradition.”³⁷ In Gandhi’s spiritual politics, the individual *Satyagrahi* seeks to embody a spirituality so profound that this personal liberation becomes the basis for social liberation. He argued that the *Avatars* continue to make such a powerful impact on great masses of people precisely because they embodied *moksha* and because we all long for that liberation.

Engaged Buddhists have emphasized that the Sangha provides the essential social connection for the individual. Traditionally, the Sangha was limited to monks and nuns, but in engaged Buddhism women and men of the laity are included. The Dalai Lama saw the Sangha as a wide ethically-based community: “the virtuous community . . . the Sangha has many different levels, ranging from the observance of basic ethics all the way through the ten *bhumi*, or stages, to total enlightenment.”³⁸ The Soka Gakkai, a Japanese engaged Buddhist sect, has been quite successful in knitting together local neighbourhood groups into a vast international community in East and West. Since his exile from Vietnam, Nhat Hanh has worked in the West, inspiring nearly three hundred sanghas.³⁹ The Sangha has become for him a “community of resistance” which functions on the family, community, and national level to make a “truly peaceful future”⁴⁰ possible. According to Hunt-Perry and Fine, “in Buddhist practice over the centuries, the Sangha or ‘spiritual community’ jewel has been emphasized less than the jewels of the Buddha and the Dharma. Thich Nhat Hanh has suggested, however, that the next Buddha, the Maitreya, will come not as a single person ‘but as a Sangha’.”⁴¹ I am reminded of Gandhi’s statement that one day a “thousand Gandhis” would come to lead liberation movements all over the globe. To be sure, Gandhi was quite clear that he was not an *Avatar*, not a Maitreya, but he understood that it would take a number of interconnected movements to liberate the whole world. It seems to me that Gandhi’s and engaged Buddhists’ belief in the necessity of individual and community liberation was fundamentally the same. King’s statement about the engaged Buddhist community, that at its widest it includes “the creation of harmonious community in which the former enemies all participate,”⁴² is characteristic of Gandhi’s spiritual politics.

Many who remained in India after 1947 were struck by the level of cooperation between Indians and the British.

The Buddha told his followers that the Dharmakaya, the teaching body, would remain a vital link for the Sangha after he left the earth. He stated: "Dear people, my physical body will not be here tomorrow, but my teaching body will always be here to help you. You can consider it your own teacher, a teacher who will never leave you." Nhat Hanh explains: "The Dharma is what the Buddha taught . . . the way of understanding and love."⁴³ According to the Dalai Lama, "the teachings are the means to achieve ultimate freedom," and "the main purpose of all our vows is to reduce attachment."⁴⁴ But by the teachings, the Dharma, he did not mean merely the Buddha sutras or any writings for that matter. He stated: "the Dharma is here in the mind (he gestured towards his heart)."⁴⁵ Thich Nhat Hanh emphasized that "you cannot use words to describe the Dharmakaya," that "a teacher is also part of the Dharmakaya because she or he helps us to be awake," and that "everything is preaching the Dharma."⁴⁶ The Dalai Lama and Nhat Hanh are saying that one must live the teachings of Buddha, just as Gandhi said that "my life is my message." Many have attested to the power of the presence of Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, and Nhat Hanh.

Given the "ancient pan-Indian tradition that ascribes power to truth,"⁴⁷ Buddhists see truth and the pursuit of truth as a key to personal liberation. Engaged Buddhists connect personal to social liberation, as Gandhi did. According to Santikaro, Buddhadasa, the great Thai Buddhist leader, believed that "Dhamma [Pali for Dharma] is Truth, Reality, Law, or . . . to whatever the teachings point."⁴⁸ Increasingly, engaged Buddhists accept that truth can be found in all faith traditions. According to King, "while they strongly affirm that Buddhism is a viable vehicle to Truth or Dhamma, they also readily acknowledge that other religions may be so as well. If this is so, then what really counts is Truth, not Buddhism per se."⁴⁹ In the last several years, the Dalai Lama has become a major advocate of engaged spirituality within all faith traditions and even among those who are strictly secular. Gandhi's widely-cited statement not only that "God is Truth" but also that "Truth is God" seems to lead in the same direction. He often stated that a true *Satyagrahi* had to believe in God. But he also worked closely with many *Satyagrahis* who did not, including of course the man he designated as his heir, Jawaharlal Nehru.

In engaged Buddhism, love, compassion, and the unity of all beings play a central role. According to King, "love, compassion, interchangeability of self and other"⁵⁰ characterize the Dalai Lama. All engaged Buddhists I have studied couple love and nonviolence. Nhat Hanh states that "the essence of nonviolence is love."⁵¹ The Dalai Lama proposed to make Tibet a "Zone of Ahimsa" in his Nobel Peace Prize acceptance speech. In their central beliefs and actions, engaged Buddhists and Gandhi were in fundamental accord.

Although all Buddhists are instructed to observe vows, engaged Buddhists are unusual in that lay members often take vows that are as stringent as those of monks and nuns. Nhat Nanh's Order of Interbeing, open to monks, nuns, and lay members, is based on fourteen vows. There are a number of parallels between these vows and those that Gandhi asked *Satyagrahis* to follow in his *ashrams*. The observation of vows was a core concept of his *ashrams*, which Thomson has rightly called monastic. It is interesting that Gandhi and a number of engaged Buddhists have called on non-monastics to observe vows that were traditionally reserved for monastics.

IT SEEMS TO me that there are five major reasons for the deep correspondence between Gandhi's spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism:

- (i) Hinduism and Buddhism are closely related. Siddhartha was a Hindu, and many central tenets of Hinduism were carried over into Buddhism. Gandhi argued, as do many Hindus today, that Buddhism is in reality a major division of Hinduism: "Buddha suggested some reform in the Hindu religion. It cannot be said that the Buddha founded a new religion. Those who came after him did that . . . Hinduism and Buddhism are but one."⁵² Of course, others argue that the religions are separate, but the belief in truth, love, karma, reincarnation, and detachment—among other core-tenets—unites the two faiths.
- (ii) The Buddha, Gandhi, and engaged Buddhists were and are reformers, who have sought to find the core of their religions and to bring it into their lives and into society as a whole. Reformers tend to take the past as a path into the present and the future, to de-emphasize doctrine, and to take their beliefs out into the world. Gandhi called Buddha a reformer, Gandhi himself was a reformer, and Sallie King has argued that engaged Buddhists are reformers as well.⁵³
- (iii) Gandhi's spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism arose as Asian responses to Western civilization. Western imperialism and ethnocentric Christianity caused deep psychological trauma and sociological displacement in Asia and other parts of the world. In the first half of the twentieth century, *Satyagraha* was developed as a response to South African racism and capitalism and to the British Raj in the first half of the twentieth century, just as Nhat Hanh's engaged Buddhism was a Vietnamese response to American capitalism in the second half of the century.

On the other hand, socially engaged Christian and Theosophical theories and practices made a powerful and primarily positive

impact on Gandhi and engaged Buddhists. Western civilization contains contradictory sets of beliefs and practices. As stated above, Gandhi and Dharmapala were estranged from their cultures and religions and re-introduced to them through Western influence. Spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism are the fruits of their leaders' encounters with the West—negative and positive—and a deep study and revaluation of their own traditions.

- (iv) Gandhi has influenced directly or indirectly many, perhaps even all, liberationist movements which have come up after him. He developed an experimental approach to nonviolent change which is well-suited to modern innovation among many social movements, particularly those that are based on social liberation and personal spiritual liberation. Many engaged Buddhists acknowledge Gandhi's impact on their thinking, their lives, and their movements. Nhat Hanh wrote that his work in Vietnam was inspired by Gandhi. The young Dalai Lama went in exile from Tibet directly to India where he spoke with a wide range of Gandhians, including Jawaharlal Nehru. As a teenager, Aung San Suu Kyi went to India with her mother where she attended high school with Rajiv Gandhi, and she read Gandhi extensively.

The most direct impact of Gandhian theory and practice seems to be on the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka, "one the oldest and most celebrated Buddhist social liberation movements."⁵⁴ Founded by A.T. Ariyaratne who studied Gandhi and worked after Gandhi's death with Vinoba Bhave. "Sarvodaya" is a term coined by Gandhi meaning "the well-being of all." George Bond sees three major influences of Gandhi on the Sarvodaya movement in Sri Lanka:

- (a) "the Gandhian example of selfless service for humanity as the highest form of religious practice lies at the heart of the Sarvodaya movement."
- (b) "Gandhi and his movement used the term "Sarvodaya" to refer to a new, nonviolent, socio-economic order."
- (c) "Gandhi's focus on the village as the heart of the new socio-economic-religious order."⁵⁵

According to Bond, Ariyaratne was moved to emulate both the Bodhisattva ideal in Buddhism and the karmayogi ideal in the *Bhagavad Gita*: "at times Ariyaratne compares Sarovdaya's conception of the path as that of the Bodhisattva, the being who postpones his own enlightenment in order to remain in the world to work for the enlightenment of all. The *Bhagavad Gita* ideal of the karma-yogi, the one who does service and work as the highest form of religion, especially as updated by Gandhi, also

functions as a central paradigm for Sarovodaya's path.⁵⁶ As stated above, Queen sees the compatibility between Gandhi, the *karmayogi* and the *bodhisattva* ideal. Here we see that one of the major engaged Buddhists seeks to combine the *Bodhisattva* and the *karmayogi* paths. It seems to me that true modern-day *satyagrahis* and engaged Buddhists are working at various levels to embody the *karmayoga* and the *bodhisattva* ideal, for the fundamental correspondence between them is the concerted effort of a spiritual seeker to serve the needs of others in the here-and-now.

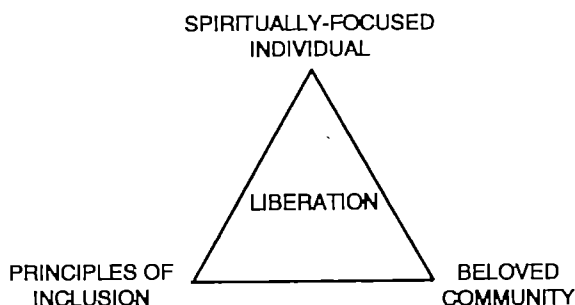
From this perspective, the words used to describe the actions taken in the world are less important than the spirit behind the action. Religious doctrine is secondary to the spiritual impulse motivating the action. According to Bond, Detlef Kantowski has shown that the power of the urge to serve in both Gandhi's *satyagraha* and Ariyaratne's sarvodaya was stronger than any doctrinal differences between Hinduism and Buddhism: "Kantowski observed that 'Gandhi tried to realize his true Self through dedication to the Service of All: Sarvodaya workers in Sri Lanka express their Non-Self by Sharing with All. Starting from different assumptions both concepts lead Sarvodaya in India and Sri Lanka into society and not away from it'.⁵⁷ In a discussion of the similarity between Gandhi and Nhat Hanh concerning the principle of opposing the deed, but not the doer of the deed, Sallie King draws the same conclusion: "Gandhi's principle is based upon reverence for the eternal Atman within each individual, Nhat Hanh's upon the very absence of such a thing, that is, the emptiness of self manifesting in the web of interbeing."⁵⁸

- (v) Gandhi's spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism are expressions of a worldwide upsurge of engaged spirituality. All spiritually-engaged movements, not merely those among Hindus and Buddhists, have a tendency to de-emphasize doctrine in their focus on concerted action for the common good. Thomas Merton, the Trappist monk, met Thich Nhat Hanh in 1966, and stated after extensive dialogue with him: "He and I see things exactly the same way."⁵⁹ Merton found fundamental correspondences between his engaged Catholicism and Gandhian *satyagraha* as well. According to Ignacio Cabezón, Liberation Theology in Latin America is involved in a "critique of the entire theological enterprise from 'right thinking' to 'right speaking' to 'right doing'". For the liberationist theologian the starting-point of a religiously based philosophy of social action is not theory but practice.⁶⁰ Gandhi's "experiments with Truth," his "right doing," was often far ahead of the spoken and written formulations of his actions. As Madhu Kishwar has argued, Gandhi "was one of the few men whose practice was at times far ahead of his theory and his stated ideals."⁶¹

ENGAGED SPIRITUALITY CAN be found in all major religions, but it is not a new religion, in that its practitioners tend to remain within their own faith communities. However, they often seem closer to each other than to more conventional, less inclusive members of their own faith communities. Some Christian, Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhists, who cling to the most fundamentalist, most doctrinaire forms of their respective religions actually, hate their socially engaged co-religionists. Gandhi was killed by a fanatical Hindu, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by a fanatical Jew.

Engaged spirituality is not limited to those who identify themselves with a religion. Although at a time it has seemed that religiously-based movements and secular movements are fundamentally different, a closer examination reveals that many secular movements have a strong element of spirituality within them. For example, the East Germans I interviewed after the Fall of the Wall stated that many of the leaders in the nonviolent overthrow of the East German government were either Christian nonviolent activists or secular activists who believed in non-religious forms of spirituality. As the Dalai Lama states, "I have come to the conclusion that whether or not a person is a religious believer or not does not matter much. Far more important is that he be a good human being."⁶² He believes that the essence of spirituality is not religion, but rather than religion is based on spirituality. He is aiming at a definition of the spiritual within the realm of ethics, not exclusively within the realm of religion, although he affirms that at its best religion includes the ethical. As he writes, "the unifying characteristic of the qualities I have described as 'spiritual' may be said to be some level of concern for others' well-being,"⁶³ or in Gandhi's terms, "the well-being of all." The Dalai Lama calls for a spiritual revolution, which he asserts "entails an ethical revolution."⁶⁴ In that revolution, all who have concern for others' well-being can participate, whether they choose a religious or a secular path.

Gandhi's spiritual politics, engaged Buddhism, and a wide variety of other religious and non-religious liberationist movements can be shown schematically in the following diagram:



From this perspective, it is becoming increasingly important that a spiritually-focused individual seeks personal and social liberation within a

supportive community, which Dr Martin Luther King, Jr. called the "beloved community." Although the forms are different among different communities, the term seems apt because love is acknowledged widely as the binding force in an effective liberationist community. And even though there may be disagreements as to which ethical principles a given individual or community may wish to emphasize, there is widespread agreement on what constitutes ethical principles. Most would include truth, love, compassion, trust, forgiveness, unity, altruism, among others. Essential to successful cooperation within a movement or among movements is the principle of inclusivity, and engaged spirituality is by its very nature inclusive.

IF IT IS true that Gandhian and engaged Buddhist movements are fundamentally compatible, why would there not be more research about their commonalities and why would there not be more cooperative ventures between Gandhians and engaged Buddhists? As I examine the ecumenical work in Europe, I see concerted efforts to find common ground between Catholics and Protestants. The Dalai Lama and Thich Nhat Hanh have written books exploring commonalities between Buddhism and Christianity, and there have been conferences examining the relationship between Buddhist philosophy and modern quantum physics. All endeavours to bridge differences between religions and between religion and science seem worthwhile to me, but from the research I have read and conversations with Gandhians and engaged Buddhists, I have yet to see the same degree of bridging across the divide of Hindus and Buddhists that I see between Buddhists and Christians. Given the origin of Buddhism in Hinduism and their continued philosophical correspondences, and given the particularly close connection between Gandhi's spiritual politics and engaged Buddhism within the over-arching context of engaged spirituality, one can only hope that greater dialogue and cooperation will occur in the future.

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Power, Resistance, and Change in India at the Beginning of the Twenty-first Century: The Post-Sociological View

Arun Kumar Sharma

... by conventional concepts of morality, Gandhi was a lunatic. But when in need, like millions of others, I am willing to use his "lunacy" as a basis of political praxis.

That this part of the globe still has a majority of people who do not speak the language of modernity gives us better options for a postmodern future than have the fully modern societies.

[Ashish Nandy quoted by Makrand Paranjape in his book Decolonization and Development: Hind Swaraj Revisited]

The Problem

THE TERMS LIKE "power," "resistance," and "change" are the everyday words for sociologists. No matter what aspect of social structure they study, sociologists cannot ignore the nature of power differentials. Classes, status groups and parties are all phenomena of the distribution of power¹ and any resistance offered to the upper class, higher status group, or the dominant political party is an instance of the resistance of power. While power differentials maintain the social structure, resistance to power aims at changing the social structure. All sociologists, starting from the founding fathers of sociology such as Comte to present-day sociologists such as Giddens² have not only made social transformation their subject of study but have also taken a definite position on the processes of transformation. While Comte argued that sociologists must welcome the processes of change adopting a positive orientation towards them, Giddens said that in

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his opinion sociology has a subversive or critical character, associated with fomenting of rebellion, a stimulus to revolt. Yet the issues involved in the studies of power in sociology remain ill-understood and ill-theorized, partly because in the twenty-first century the relations of power and social structure have become more complex and fluid.

Studies of protest and change in Indian society at the beginning of the twenty-first century pose some additional difficulties. The nation-state in India is a multi-national and multi-cultural entity,³ existing not in a vacuum but in a fast-changing world of technology, media, and identity. This paper attempts to reflect on some aspects of power, protest, and change in India. Adopting an entropy view, the paper focuses on the uncertainties arising in the processes of protest and change and suggests that in the present context only a vernacular, Gandhian approach can lead to levelling of hegemonies.

Emerging Foci of Uncertainty in the Processes of Change

Changes in social structure are doubly linked to the conceptualization of change. While changes in social structure are bound to generate new conceptual models of change in theory, state and subaltern groups have used intellectual models to stabilize or change society. In sociological literature there are three major models of change used to theorize resistance in simple or eclectic fashion. They may be called functional, Marxist, and post-Marxist models. Each of these models belonged to a definite age in history. Functional model was developed in late nineteenth century to capture the processes of change in Europe—basically to explain the social phenomena associated with political and nationalistic movements and industrial revolution. These phenomena carried within them the seeds of ideas of equality and democracy. Functional model was reinvented in the second part of the twentieth century to build suggestive systems of development to guide development and modernization in the neo-colonial countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa. The Marxist model, developed mostly on the basis of writings of Karl Marx, belongs to the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. It situates social conflicts in the relations of productions of the capitalist society. It showed how in industrial society a newly emerging class of proletariats struggled to resist the capitalist form of production through political and revolutionary means and replace it by its own dictatorship. While the functional model gave more importance to society, the conflict model gave more importance to labour, the economic soul of society, which, if freed from the capitalist exploitation, can pave the way for a functioning society of workers. Anxieties faced by critical thinkers of the Vienna School in application of the Marxist model to post-revolutionary Russian society and absence of revolutionary conscious among the working classes led to promotion and re-working of the conflict model at a higher level of abstraction. Further, movements of the second

half of twentieth century in the West and their echo in the less developed countries gave rise to a new model of movement which stressed that there is something new about these movements, which could not be explained by the earlier models. The neo-social movement model showed that society has crossed the phase of modernity; it has become fragmented, more uncertain, and fresh attempts are needed to comprehend the connection between society and change.

According to the neo-social movements school, there are many similarities between the functional and Marxist models of society. Both are positivist, and, therefore, essentialist. Both models recognize the importance of political power. Both emphasized the linkages between different institutions of society and both stress the collective consciousness manifesting itself inside the individual minds. However, in the former model power was seen to be evolving at a higher plane and in the other it was seen to be hostile to class interests. In both the models, inequality with respect to political power remained an accepted fact and Dahrendorf announced that the idea of equality is only a myth.⁴

The late-twentieth century sociologists face the crisis of theory in the very formulation of the concept of social structure. It is said that both structural functionalism and structural Marxism are totalizing theories. They suffer from "an over-reliance on a centralized and unified notion of power."⁵ The late-twentieth century sociologists could see more vividly the complexities of issues involved in power and resistance and discovered that in the new society resistance to the state is not at the center of social movements. As a matter of fact, in contemporary society, to follow Lyder, power has become "a multiple and mobile field of force relations where far-reaching, but never completely stable, effects of domination are produced." This situation demands a new vision of the future and a new form of planning. To quote:

The starting-point for this plan of the future is the *unbinding* of politics, that is, the spectrum of mainstream politics, secondary politics, sub-politics, and alternative politics that has arisen under the conditions of developed democracy in a thoroughly differentiated society. The assessment is that this lack of a centre for politics can no longer be reversed, even by the demand for democratization. Politics *has generalized itself in a certain sense*, and has therefore become "centreless." The unalterability of this transition of executive politics into a political process, which has of this transition of executive politics into a political process, which has lost its uniqueness, its opposite number, its concept and its mode of acting all at the same time, is, however, not only an occasion for sadness. In it a *different epoch of modernization* announces itself, one which was characterized here by the concept of reflexivity. The "law" of functional differentiation is subverted and nullified by dedifferentiations (risk conflicts and cooperation, the moralization of production, the differentiation of sub-politics). In this second-degree rationalization, the principles of centralization and bureaucratization, along with the associated rigidity of social structures, come into conflict with the principles of flexibility.⁶

The model of neo-social movements emphasized the following: (a) neither the functional theory nor the conflict theory can adequately explain the rise of neo-social movements such as ecological movements, women's movements, students' protests, anti-nuclear and peace movements, etc.; (b) the new collective actors in resistance aim at capturing the state power but at the transformation of values; (c) in protest and change role of ethnicity is much more than what the sociologists could anticipate; and (d) the identities that cause social movements are creation of historicity and cannot simply be reduced to class.

When the above models of power and resistance are used to explain change in the early twenty-first century India, a number of difficulties are bound to arise. The first and foremost difficulty is that Indian society is not an undifferentiated monolithic society in which one can easily identify the protagonists of resistance and change. Contemporary Indian society, unlike the modern Western society that has been theorized by the French, German, American and British sociologists, is a protean society. It is continuously evolving due to interactive relationships between parts in the context of simultaneity of non-contemporaneous social formations.⁷ Such a society would defy an essentialist characterization of its collective consciousness (one may argue that Indian society has always been like this and only a strong, though changing, power had created the myth of stable Indian tradition). Kothari⁸ says that India was always a multi-tiered, concentric circled and continental span of civilization that was sustained through democracy. It has been a plural, federal, multi-ethnic, and multi-national society. It is *sui generis* a society that is shaping continuously under the influences of its own multiple traditions, structural forces, assertion of various little selves (some of only recent making), industrialization, globalization, Westernization, post-modernity, and conflicting visions of veritable future.

Thus it will be too naïve to separate the forces of resistance to class, status, and party in the economic, social, and the political structures. The analytical approach would not do justice to social reality and would be an outdated modernist explanation of change. An alternative would be to use an ostensibly Orientalist model of Indian society and work out its implications for different parts and institutions. A number of European and Indian sociologists have rejected this ironically occidental methodology and have argued for building an indigenous model of Indian society. However, the indological approach too has limits. It too has failed to provide a model of society that can be used for theoretical and practical purposes. This leads to a postmodern question: is it possible or even worth trying to have an essentialist construction of living society in the twenty-first century? And if the answer to this question is "no," what emancipatory practices does the new thinking suggest?

Twenty-first century India is a good canvass for depiction of uncertainty. Some foci of this uncertainty lie in the following: greater acceptance of

ethnicity and death of universalistic conception of humanism; shifting network of alliances, decentering or virtual death of subject, reflexive institutionalization of movements; linguistic demands of sacralization and demonization; participation of state in and volourization of the language of protest, multiple adjustments and needs of subversives to conform to other values and institutions of society; role of media; and a shifting tension between reformism and radicalism. With the rise of the ethnicity simple, the realistic conception of humanism is dead. Ethnicity is not a simple matter of communal identity or formation of interest groups. It also involves construction and creative use of a world-view. If the death of God permitted the rise of industrial and agrarian conflicts, the death of taken-for-granted conception of humanism permits postmodern uncertainties of protest. Recently when the prime minister suggested that talks with Kashmir militants be held in the framework of humanism, it became a sensitive point for debate regarding holding talks with militants. Humanism needs other sub-stratum to stand on. It has lost its autonomy.

In the new situation, power is closely linked to the reflexive approach to institutionalization making protests and movement-institutionalization a continuous process. Both revolutionaries and adversaries continuously assess the consequences of institutionalization of movements and revise goals and strategies. Presence of multiple values, multiple identities, and multiple conceptions of goals among and within movements leads to very cautious and subtle processes of sacralization and demonization. This task becomes all the more complex due to participation of democratic state in welfare and protests. Many movements in post-Independence India, involving castes and tribes, urban-rural conflicts, gender, and statehood were promoted or had tacit support of state or ruling party.

Ways of Implication of Uncertainty in Social Action

There are many intersecting ways in which uncertainty is implicated in social action. It would be difficult to identify each of them precisely and establish their relative importance. Still for the purpose of theorization one may mention about the following five: (a) a tension between fragmentation, individualism, and postmodern condition; (b) political democratization; (c) double role of ethnicity; (d) tension between different concepts of time; and (e) individual and collective responses to unacceptable situation.

Fragmentation, Individualism, and Postmodern Condition

Foucault⁹ suggested that in modern society disciplinary power and bio-power have replaced the monarchical power. These new forms of power are continuous, dispersed, and localized. People are simply the conduits through which power operates and which are produced by the power. In other words, power is plural and fragmentary. How do people resist this form of power? How does the individual define himself in relation to

variegated power? Foucault has not been able to give adequate answer to such questions. He did not attempt to build an integrated theory of self and power, although in his later works he has focused more on technologies of the self and decentering his prior emphasis on power and domination.¹⁰ For Foucault, resistance is a form of power. Resistance merely demonstrates the necessity of that discipline (power) that provokes it.¹¹ To quote:

... the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization; as the process which, through ceaseless struggles and confrontations, transforms, strengthens, or reverses them; as the support which these force relations find in one another, thus forming a chain or a system, or on the contrary, the disjunctions and contradictions which isolate them from one another; and lastly, as the strategies in which they take effect, whose general design or institutional crystallization is embodied in the state apparatus, in the formulation of law, in the various social hegemonies.¹²

To make a theory of power and protest, one has to confront directly with the dynamics of fragmentation, individualization of subject, and postmodern condition. In India this manifests itself in the form of alliances of little selves and an alliance of individual and society.

For Durkheim, changeover from clan to society was associated with changeover from religious consciousness to community consciousness. Totemism was transformed to sociologism. The old non-dualistic penetration that did not separate human world from non-human world (the terrestrial phenomena or heavenly bodies were assigned to a particular clan) was transformed to a dualistic world-view. In the new system God was supplanted by society. Primitive explanatory system was transformed to conceptual thinking and philosophy. Durkheim did not realize that along with this transformation man's consciousness got fragmented. A sociological man had partitioned the totemic relationship in which his cognitive conjunction with society became increasingly more important. To follow Weber, rationality has been fragmented into formal and substantive rationality. *Vernunft* has separated from *Verstand*.¹³ This was bound to produce a welter of reactions. Certainty of rituals performed with uncertain consequences gave way to uncertainty of transformational approaches to achieve certain changes in society. An idea emerged that society can be different from what it is now. Totem had much greater autonomy than society. At a deeper level, a self-understanding based on manipulation of rituals was changed to a self-understanding based on manipulation of ends of intervention. This made the individual more and more uncertain as time passed. Individual's relationship with society, the product of modernity, has only uncertain consequences, leading to double involvement of human agent and social ends.

In the West uncertainty has arisen due to division of individual. In India it is doubly arising due to both fragmentation of and differences in

history, and the emerging postmodern condition. Whereas the basic social unit in the Western society was the individual, in the Indian counterpart it was the group, and the social stratification system in India was based on the social ideology of hierarchy and philosophical ideology of oneness.¹⁴ In the West, disenchantment with the world led to secularization and rationalization of the people's world-view and their normative perspective on the life-world. This liberated man from the great chain of being, which bound man in a sacred-mystical relationship of hierarchy and transcendence with godhead¹⁵ and developed a capitalist order. The Indian society has restrained the march of capitalism through the resistance offered by its cultural, religious, military, and political institutions.¹⁶

In India—in contrast to Europe or China—the principled reconstruction of the political (or economic) arena did not constitute the major institutional focus or aim of most movements of protest and heterodoxy or of the numerous sectarian activities that developed over time. Bhakti, Jainism, or Buddhism itself (which is the most sectarian of these), and other minor sects or movements in Hinduism did not seek the principled reconstruction of the political or economic arena, even though in many cases segments of such movements participated in the change of political regimes and in the wars between different kings and princes.¹⁷

Thus in India imperfection of capitalism was accompanied by the dynamism of civil society. For long civil society had faced conflicts, mobilization, protests, and reconstruction. The anti-colonial struggle superimposed on it and fight against imperialism united temporarily all interests and values.¹⁸ It also created a will to power, that is, will to govern oneself of *swaraj* rather than a will to govern others.¹⁹ After Independence for some time the desire to be free was transformed into desire to catch up with the Western countries. But soon it gave way to political mobilizations along ascriptive lines. According to Kothari, the new model of development was based on urban and industrial affluence, promoted by experts, mostly trained in the West, who worked with the help of secular rational bureaucracy.²⁰ This model was bound to cause misery to the vast mass of people who could think only in terms of traditional loyalties that remained alive despite the onslaught of modernity. While in the West postmodern condition divided individuals, made them insecure and fall prey to ethnicity, in India rise of ethnicity was a compound process: it was produced by tradition and nurtured by postmodern condition. Thus India at the dawn of the twenty-first century not only has the post-modern cultural and political conditions but also makes any sociology other than post-modern a liability. The country suffers from conflicts between the following forces: political requirements of drive towards industrialization which needs a strong state; need for mobilization and organization of political power leading to particular strategies of organization; demands of fight against communalism, regionalism, and other divisive tendencies that frequently

threaten the viability of the nation-state; and promise of equality and individual autonomy. The erosion of the traditional foci of allegiance makes basic consensus harder to achieve.²¹ To use the metaphor created by Roy, India is like a Kathakali Man whose body is his soul.²²

Indian sociologists have studied caste and tribes for a long period. Yet the very constructions continuously pose conceptual as well as empirical problems for the academicians. Meanings of caste and tribe have been changing continuously for both people and social scientists.²³ So far sociologists believed that caste is the fundamental principle of Hindu society. The anti-Orientalist conception that caste is not legitimated by Hindu ideology but its emergence shows only the weakening of Hindu power complicates the matter further.²⁴ There is no conceptual agreement on whether tribes should be seen as the originals inhabitants of a region, little traditions associated with the great tradition of Hindu India, a community in constant interaction with the larger society, or the dispossessed and deprived people.²⁵ Such meanings have shaped and are constantly shaping the images which are commonly available to people. Here it is necessary to clarify that castes and tribes often appear in literature only as the researcher's categories. They are not the first order constructions of people who are divided into a large number of groups within castes and tribes, each an ethnic category in itself, each having its own territory, language, and identity.

In an article, Vartak²⁶ has shown how the image of Shivaji was constructed in response to colonialism in India. For long in India, there was only one brahmanical image of Shivaji. In postcolonial period this image is greatly fragmented: now the image of Shivaji is reinterpreted in the non-brahman movement against brahman hegemony, orthodox brahman historiography, liberal tradition, official view and kshatriya tradition of Maratha nationalism in Western India. Mixing of post-social science with social science and hypercommodification have given a new shape to politics in which mandal, kamandal and brigands derive strength from each other. Concepts like class, masses, marginality, objectivism, and interests are no longer by themselves sufficient for analysis of resistance. Moreover, politics is not a moral work any longer. To use the phrase from Vikram Seth's *A Suitable Boy*, politics is like a coal trade. Hands and faces of all those who participate in politics become a little black. As an example, after reservation of seats for women at the panchayat level, at several places women are known to have been *ordered* by their husbands to occupy power positions and the money they withdrew for the development of community is taken away by husbands to be squandered in liquor, tea, and snacks.²⁷

Political Democratization

Democratization of politics is yet another source of structural uncertainties in post-Independence India. Democracy in a multi-normative society is

likely to introduce uncertainties as democracy of a differentiated and stratified society by nature is against any normative standardization, and, therefore, against normative clarity. Democratization implies that based on political experience, skills, ambition, and situation, different normative groups are able to articulate and assert their norms. Thus differential norms and changing balance among them creates a condition in which ordinary members of society are confused and are often likely to view things from their respective interests rather than from societal point of view, which is a precondition of clarity of norms. Present-day democracy is no more an arena of unilinear or monodimensional politics of praja, slaves, peasants, or proletariat. It is a politics of powerful interest groups. In this politics no present interest has zero power. Even silence cannot be taken as an example of negation of power. Negation of negation has long been replaced by negation of affirmation. Ironically, uncertainty distributed widely in this system is a creation of certain interests in the political domain.

Ironically, Kothari²⁸ rightly said, democracy in the Third World is taking an anti-people turn. The growing concerns for stability and security conflict with the demand of the poor for better access to resources and opportunities. But planks of stability and security demand that the poor be dispensed with. The new paradigm of state based on rational, secular, and scientific view of the world according to which the destitute, the diseased, and the dispossessed are simply incapable of performing in a changed world context, of keeping pace with rapid technological advancement, of being in turn with a world based on centrally coordinated structures of participation and governance, treats the poor rather than rich as parasites. Thus democracy that at one time played a revolutionary role under the aegis of positive state is turning against the poor.

The issue is how does political uncertainty interact with other types of uncertainties? Business, industry, religion, family, academia, recreation, all show the sign of rising entropy. They contribute to and derive strength from political uncertainty often leading to conflicts without ideology, even without class or ethnic substratum.²⁹ They are implicated in a synergistic relationship that makes public heterogeneous³⁰ and seriality³¹ a difficult issue. The cases of accumulated powerlessness that are often cited in favour of determinism or as explanations of heterogeneous public are actually the residues of the past and they hardly match with the extrapolations of the future. In the new game some of the past disabilities may pose to be a great boon.

Double Role of Ethnicity

Oommen³² distinguishes three types of societies: "hierarchical societies which differentiate people; egalitarian societies which are characterized by simple equality in which one dominant good is widely distributed; and societies characterized by complex equality which establish a set of

relationships such that domination is impossible . . . no citizen's standing in one sphere with regard to one social goal can be undercut by his standing in some other sphere, with regard to some other good." For long, if not since inception, Indian society had been carrying the value of complex equality but practising hierarchy in reality. Sensitization to Western egalitarianism therefore led to protest against the dominant forces in the value system of India. This tendency, however, started weakening with the onslaught of Westernization and modernization, which obfuscated Indian values and, to use a phrase from Giddens, institutionalized doubt.³³ One of the biggest forces of change in this respect was technology. Gandhi who was against technology on moral grounds, saw that it destroyed soul force and the indigenous capacity to promote development of all. Traditional resistance to toxin of capitalism was killed by the new technology.

As mentioned above, capitalism that developed in India is not the replica of European capitalism. It is as much a product of rationalization as of hyperrationalisation, which fragments "problem-solving," thrust of modernization. To quote:

The social effect of new technology is both instrumental and symbolic-intrinsic. At the instrumental level, it contributes to differentiation of occupation, roles and values which form part of a uniform global sub-culture or sub-system and yet, in the symbolic-intrinsic domain, they engender identities of self-consciousness that are segmentary or self-encapsulating. Empirically, the march of global society and culture carries amongst its legions the forces that reinforce smaller identities, for example, ethnicity, sub-nationalism and cultural and religious fundamentalism. Despite all its benevolent consequences, the expansion of the global domain does not resolve the problems of social and cultural alienation, or that of conflicts due to ethnicity and minoritism. In fact, these are compounded by the emergence of new social problems of the disintegration of the family, decline in community values and alienation of the individual.³⁴

Such is the context, which is conducive to the growth of ethnicity. According to Eisenstadt and Hartman, the processes of cultural and institutional formation in India focused on (a) the continuous reformulation of membership criteria in ascriptive-primordial and religious-political communities, (b) the redefinition of the boundaries of these communities, and (c) after gaining access to these communities, on the periodic attempts to infuse them with a strong sense of equality. They did not develop alternative conceptions of political order. Gandhi was the first person to understand this. He sacralized politics and at the same time devalourized state.³⁵ This leads to conflicts over boundaries, which are contested, defined, and redefined in the veritable space of inequality often resulting into beyond crosscutting conflicts, characteristics of post-industrial society.

As such in praxis of resistance several identities are involved: primordial ascriptive (gender, caste, religion, linguistic, etc.) class/occupation, and

political and symbolic. Undoubtedly, they were all the time present in the mobilization of various categories against the British Raj during the freedom struggle. However, as the main enemy was the British government, all parties chose to ignore internal differentiation in fight against the Raj. After Independence the situation changed. People developed very high expectations from Swaraj and the new political elite made several promises. When Swaraj failed to meet popular expectations and conditions of masses became more precarious, internal differences of mobilizations and political parties came to the fore. In this situation primordial identities, many of which had their own theodicy like worldviews, started asserting, independently as well as within the agrarian, tribal, rural movements and political organizations. To follow Singh, emergence of ethnicity as the vehicle of protest has two faces: "one mirrors the values of self-consciousness, quite in tune with the logic of disenchantment; the other tends to foreclose dialogue with other cultures, which is the antithesis of modernity. Communalism, which sponsors several ethnic movements in India, has this characteristic."³⁶

To quote Oommen:

The nationalist expectancy, it was believed, would de-sacralize primordial ties and partly it did, albeit temporarily. But once the historicity of context changed, that is, with the disappearance of the alien ruler, we witness a re-sacralization of these primordial ties and the usual tendency of the mainstream is to view it with considerable alarm. . . . this re-sacralization of primordial ties is partly an indication of the "quest for community" and partly a response to the process of marginalization, actual or imaginary, the peripheral communities are threatened with.³⁷

Tension between Different Concepts of Time

Another way of implication of uncertainty in India is the result of active processes of conceptualization of time. Eisenstadt and Hartman³⁸ showed that cosmic time, as conceived in Hindu cosmology, was full of ruptures and discontinuities but was not connected to mundane time. This led to a sharp dissociation between ontological time, defined in terms of the different ages of the universe, and concrete, mundane, institutional, economic and political change. Caste and caste like collectivities in India not only have primordial and territorial identities, they also have elaborate ideological constructions, which try to make mythical links between ontological and mundane time. This process became particularly important when colonization and the subsequent developments imposed a historical concept of time on the ahistoric concepts of time in Indian tradition. It is not surprising that one cause of Akali protest in contemporary India has been the issue of acceptance of the Sikh calendar. However, calendar is only a small and manifest reason of protest. Constant ontological construction of mundane time in the respective value frameworks of different collectivities

is the hidden and the major cause of conflicts. Ironically, democracy has failed to produce alliance of people or people's intelligentsia. Since the state created intelligentsia is unable to satisfy people's cravings for social construction or meanings, particularistic intelligentsia ("organic intellectuals" to use Gramsci's phrase) mostly supported by elite sections of different ethnic groups fills the gap. Thus value particularities become historical ethnic collectivities in which the "leitmotif of political demagoguery"³⁹ plays an important role.

Concept of time has acquired significance because in subjecting an a-historical construction to historical treatment educated elite and knowledge elite fill the vacuum created by the withdrawal of the modern state. What the state has relinquished or lost is taken over by science elite, education elite, religious elite, and arts elite of civil society (who often act as the post-science elite). The vacated territory has not become an uncontested domain of people.⁴⁰ The different elites are presenting *historical* visions of the future through whom the new forms of power operate. Through such efforts Dravidian elite, tribal elite, assimilationist Hindu elite, caste elite and communal elite are making a reassessment of their position in society. After all, as Gramsci averred, the philosophy of praxis requires that the fight against economic forces go with fight against cultural forces of hegemony too.

Individual and Collective Response to Unacceptable Situation

It may also be recognised that people protest both as a part of a large entity and as individuals. In *The God of Small Things*, if Kochu Maria could not stop wearing her kunukku because if she did, how would people know that despite her lowly cook's job she was a Syrian Christian, Mar Thomite, she is protesting classificatory scheme based on occupation. Strong identification with one value or source of power at the individual level can lead to many forms including conformity, innovation, retreatism, ritualism, and rebellion. Fundamentalist acts, thefts, withdrawal from society, indifference, industrial or organizational sabotage, rape or even unusual sexual preferences are often the manifestations of it.

However, the new condition has made the individual increasingly dependent on society. Individuals, irrespective of power, goal, or mode of resistance, must surrender to a network of power. For society their surrender becomes a part of forces of legitimation, seduction, and repression. Here it would be relevant to mention Lyotard's concept of immateriality, "the erosion of identity, the breaking-down of stable barriers between the self and a manipulable world produced by our implication in opaquely labyrinthine technological and social system."⁴¹ This produces a number of reactions to power. Today everybody in India knows the story of Veerappan who became a symbol of the Tamil cause for many. At the micro level, hundreds of micro Veerappans espouse the cause of micro

Tamilians everyday and their claims are accepted or contested. The individual must convert all his anxieties, complexes, guilts, frustrations, and ambitions into anxieties, complexes, guilts, frustrations, and ambitions of contesting communities. This collectivization of cognition and values of people, especially the lumpen proletariats, deprived and depraved, leads to a new era in Indian politics. In this process individuals lose them in expectation of gains in protest against the unacceptable situation.

Alert against the Irony of Protest

Flexible and mutually permeable boundaries lead to a mode of political intervention that influences public opinion and policy towards a boundary. In this mode of intervention the task of recreation of civil society, nation-building, demands of sub-nationalism, identities based on tribal status, gender, religion and language, and development and cultural politics are intricately mixed.⁴² To protest against a policy or a value is to protest against or support many other policies or values. For example, to participate in women's movements such a Rashtrasevika Samiti is to support the ideology of RSS, a politico-religious outfit, to defend the tradition against Western values, is to become a partner in internal colonisation of Muslims and Christians, and to serve the interests of Indian and global capitalism.⁴³

In the light of the above, it is imperative to caution the various protagonists of change that in the present age variegated forms of power produce variegated forms of values. "There are host of unintended consequences of collective action that may turn out to be obstacles in future projects and thus hamper the formation of other valuable groups."⁴⁴ Following Gandhi, Terchek⁴⁵ says that many locations of power in civil society cancel aspirations for political equality and serve to favour some and degrade others. Fighting against one type of value or system of power may lead to strengthening of other equally or more repugnant values or systems of power in society. Nobody ever fights against all values. Actually over-commitment to some values leads to protest against other values. Resistance is also a form of power and to resist a system of power is to surrender to other systems of power. Extreme commitment to Marxism-Leninism (Naxalite ideology) has often led to regional outfits and secessionism, environmentalism to feminism, humanism to casteism, rationalization of religion to fundamentalism, demand for equality to regionalism, reforms to marginalization.

Marx was not the first person to draw attention to exploitation. Many people, intellectuals and laity, had voiced their concern about the condition of the working classes. Those who did not oppose inequality did not do so because they were more committed to other personal or social value. Yet the degree of disharmony between different values did not pose such a great problem of protest in the industrial society as it poses in today's world of dedifferentiation and decentralization.⁴⁶ On the one hand, a large segment of India is still poor and illiterate. On the other hand, the progressive

modernization is leading to loss of a precise set of power loci and decoupling of conflicts. Consequently, in this age protest and change, myth of divine kinship, practical ends, culture and psychology of the time, social integration and coherence, ideology and religion are intermixed.⁴⁷ For example, people's agitation against the proposed new port in Umbergaon has clearly brought to surface the tensions between the dominant development paradigm and people's needs in a tribal region, and the place of charismatic leaders, police terror, ex-army officers, human rights, and environmentalists in the resistance against state.⁴⁸ This implies that the protagonists of change must continuously revise their strategies and language and method to protest so that in the ever-changing and polycentric reality they may help in attaining goals in the desired time frame.

Sen⁴⁹ said that the demands for equality in terms of one might lead to inequality with respect to another variable, since the two perspectives can, quite possibly, conflict. Along similar lines, it may be said that in the present-day chameleon like structure, protest against one type of dominance often strengthens other types of dominance. Beteille,⁵⁰ after saying that the empowerment through the class struggle was a story that has now been played out and offers hardly any new prospect, and that the Indian way of securing empowerment for the unempowered seems to be quotas on the basis of community, caste and gender, cautions:

The distribution of benefits and burdens according to community, caste, and gender is fundamentally at odds with the idea of citizenship on which our Constitution rests. The rights of citizenship are rights vested in individuals irrespective of race, caste, creed, sex or place of birth. It is one thing to acknowledge that benefits and burdens are in fact distributed unequally among castes and communities and between men and women. It is quite another to give legal and moral support to policies that assign precedence in the name of social justice to community, caste and gender over the individual as citizen. Special provision may no doubt be made for the benefit of severely stigmatised or marginalised groups; but they should be restricted and not pervasive, and their costs to individuals as citizens should not be ignored.

Social scientists aver that Marxism has failed. Heredia⁵¹ argues that in the contemporary world Gandhi's ideas could lead to centring of the periphery: in politics with "antyodaya;" in religion by debrahmanising Hinduism, de-institutionalising practice and personalizing belief; in education by his proposal for *nai talim* or basic education as it came to be called; in the economy by symbolically using *khadi*.

Heredia and other writers on Gandhi refrain from examining why Gandhi's ideas, so useful to people, could not be put into practice. Some of them may say that the national elite who used Gandhi's ideas to mobilize people's were not sincere in implementing them, biased as they were towards industrial capitalism or industrial socialism. For example, the basic education may be opposed by the development lobby, antyodaya

may be opposed by the educational elite, and women's reservation by the advocates of caste-based reservation. Gandhi could not find a Lenin or Stalin to implement his ideas. Nehru had rejected Gandhian theory two years before Independence. I feel that Gandhi belongs to the post-modern age of hyperdifferentiation. Some political theorists or social movements had a wrong expectation from his post-politics. Herdia fails to see that the greatest resistance to change in any domain does not always come from the power; it may as well come from the powerless and those powerful in other domains. It is not known what the practice of Gandhian theory would lead to, as social scientists know about Marxism. Empirical data do not exist to show whether Gandhian theory is based on right assumptions about man and society. Nor are such data possible or necessary to Gandhian theory. There have been partial experiments of the kind proposed by Gandhi. They show that "antayodaya" carries dependency on state and contributes to people's political dependency; debrahmanising does not change the socio-religious character of Hinduism, practices cannot be de-institutionalised and beliefs cannot be separated from the larger process of socialization; *nai talim* or basic education does not change the educational hierarchy; and in the modern society *khadi* lacks the moral substratum. Moreover, if Gandhian ideas were to be practised in totality only would they not need the social force of a hegemonic class, which has legitimate power to implement them in totality and defend them against the possibility of differences? What would be the fate of those who attempt to develop a creative interpretation of Gandhi's creative interpretation of tradition?

Oommen observes that embourgeoisement of industrial workers has castrated them of their revolutionary vitality and the only alternative is to mobilize youth into collective action to maintain our political integrity and cultural pluralism. The question is who can motivate youth to accept the political integrity when it is weakening under post-modern influences and is in conflict with little selves. One way to manage conflicts between ethnic identities, as practised in the West, is to promote pluralism. But experience shows that in India promotion of pluralism has itself created a variety of identities and boundaries and at times can be counterproductive as the strategy. Shifting meanings and shifting configurations of castes and caste-like formations need a constant tension between boundaries.

End of Sociology and the Need for Community Action

Now the question is can those who have no or very low faith in grand meta-narrative retain optimism in a future emancipation.⁵² Roy and Srivastava⁵³ rightly say that knowledge, or intellectual exercise, by itself is not adequate to shed enough light on society as a problem. "We need to keep alive in our reflection the situation of stress and strain in which this perception comes to pass, its genesis and birth pangs, its motivation, the face of perplexity, varieties of experiencing it, the necessity of confronting and being preoccupied with it." There are many areas of consensus possible. There

may be a working consensus that something has to be done for those living below the poverty line. According to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) Survey, with the reference date of 29 May 2000, 43.20 per cent people in India live below the poverty line. In Nagaland 80.39 per cent population is poor. In Arunachal Pradesh 78.39 per cent population is poor. Other North-Eastern States like Manipur and Mizoram also have very high incidence of poverty (more than 67 per cent) suggesting a regional and tribal dimension to the problem. It may be noted that the Department of Rural Employment and Poverty Alleviation has arrived at these estimates, using the exclusion criteria rather than the inclusion criteria. Thus the actual figures of poverty are far above them. Thus India continues to suffer not only from simple inequality but also from vastness of poverty. There is a fair amount of consensus about the liberal democratic position that poverty must be resisted. Gandhi must have been terribly confused at times regarding priorities.⁵⁴

All those, irrespective of their ideology, who agree to do something for the poor must join hands to protest against processes leading to continuation and in some cases aggravation of poverty. Intellectuals/professors can continue to talk about poverty and bring in their reflection the varieties of experiencing and resisting poverty. This requires a living dialogue⁵⁵ with the poor. Post-Marxists, post-modernists, and ironically, development theorists too learn from the studies of the poor and peripheral.

Nevertheless it may be noted that the goal of poverty removal in itself may often be the manifestation of the same processes which have given rise to it. By raising the issue of poverty one may simply strengthen the institutional principles which have given rise to it. The concern about poverty as a form of resistance is to see poverty from the perspectives of the poor. What do the poor think about their poverty? Some part of this thinking may be linked to the internalization of values and ideology of power. This part must be separated from the indexical concerns of the poor and used for construction of subversive cognition. There is a need to go beyond asserting that Indian society is split, "with a productive core of the employed, and an expanding margin of the poorly fed and neglected, who are forced into subcultures and ghettos."⁵⁶ As maintained by Kothari, the vision of the rich not needing poor, and the institutions, endowments and values, which support them, is to be turned around by the vision of the poor, perhaps by a nature dependent pattern or a post-industrial agenda, which is a difficult task. This is a complex task indeed. The issue is through what institutional mechanisms have the poor communities been in the global culture. But there are no simple ways of protest in complex society. There is some sense when Habermas says: "The individual cannot be free unless all are free, and all cannot be free unless all are free in community."

In the end, whether there is an agreement with the idea that subjective assessment and articulation of world-views of the poor can offer a resistance to the power structure or not, two things can be said:

- (a) With the fall of Marxism, the golden age of sociology is over. Sociologists, in order to do anything meaningful, should work with the micro communities, learn from them, and work for them.
- (b) Absence of metanarratives at the societal level does not mean that protest has lost its logical substance. People struggling at the grassroots level have their priorities clear. They know what they want, why are they fighting, and whom are they fighting. Sociologists can take the ideas of resistance from people and look for contingent possibilities.

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Nonviolent Social Mobilisation and Social Reconstruction

D.M. Diwakar

NONVIOLENT APPROACH, WHICH has its root in the teaching of oral tradition and Buddha, later became synonymous with Gandhian path of progress. It is not in a narrow sense of the term but it has broader framework to encompass the whole approach of Gandhi in this context that assimilates also the lessons drawn from his own experience and the experiences of others who were involved in an ideological struggle, that is, anti-imperial struggle for national liberation. Therefore Gandhi is not merely a charismatic personality who drew the devotion of the large bulk of Indians for about three decades. His perceptions very much fall in the realm of science related to societal change and progress since he was involved in and leading a national liberation movement.¹

During his struggle for independence, Gandhi opened ashrams, launched satyagraha, initiated constructive programmes, convened prayer meetings, and adhered to eleven vows—five of Buddha and six others: truth, nonviolence, chastity, non-possession, non-stealing, bread labour, non-palatable, fearlessness, equal treatment and respect to all religions, swadeshi, and untouchability—for the transformation of self and society simultaneously. His practice during his stays in South Africa and later in India proved rewarding in cadre building for the liberation struggle for a nation and reconstruction of the society. Mobilisation for the freedom struggle in India proved pathfinder not only to India but also to many developing nations of the world. India also achieved its political freedom from the British but the task of reconstruction was and is an unfinished agenda. In view of this, the paper is an endeavour to deal with Gandhian practices, results, and lessons and imperatives. Practices pursued by Gandhi and later by his followers in order to comprehend the results for further scientific enquiry and social reconstruction may broadly be divided into

three categories and stages. The first stage covers those practices which Gandhi himself carried out either in South Africa or in India in his lifetime. The second involves those practices which were started and continued by the organisations and activists in Gandhian folds. And the third one envelops such practices as were not strictly carried out by Gandhian organisations but pursued independently by individuals and non-governmental organisations in the Gandhian framework. It is not possible to deal with all kinds of practices here. In fact, every practice may have a fair scope and potential of an independent volume of work if one attempts to do justice with the themes. Therefore, here, we would deal only with a few significant practices in Gandhian fold in order to derive home some lessons. However, in no case this suggests that the other forms of practices are of less importance.

Gandhi in Practice

In the process of working out means and ways to attain nonviolent social order of the goal of his *swaraj*, which was poor man's *swaraj*, many practices have been carried out. Ashrams have been the main forms of action and practice to train cadre for social reconstruction. Gandhi perceived Ashram as "a community of men of religion" in which some friends or others have spiritual relations.² The practices that Gandhi himself pursued in his lifetime may be divided into two phases, that is, his practice in (i) South Africa and (ii) India for freedom struggle against imperialism along with constructive works for the reconstruction of the society through various constructive organisations.

Practices in South Africa

Two landmark practices in South Africa—the *Phoenix Settlement* and the *Tolstoy Farm*—are worth mentioning to understand his basic ideas, thought process, and political strategies for social reconstruction. Primarily his idea of setting up an Ashram as an instrument for social reconstruction and development was heavily influenced by Ruskin's *Unto This Last*.³ He started searching out a formulation of such a community life in which the type of value system that he believed is reflected. He read books and visited places to understand the living example of community lifestyle. In this process, he was very much impressed by an "Order of Trappist monks" living at *Mariann Hill* near Pinetown, sixteen miles away from Durban as a living example of a micro community living.⁴

Gandhi found Trappist Monastic ideals helpful in promoting the vegetarian principle for improving quality of life. In his view, vegetarianism would lead to decentralisation of society, as it required involvement of many more farmers to ensure supply of vegetarian food. Consequently, overcrowding in cities would be reduced.⁵ Therefore he made an appeal to the people of South Africa for vegetarian farming. Indians took interest in

this direction. An outbreak of plague in South Africa at that time also helped in this mission. This type of community life was carried out on the basis of voluntary poverty, self-renunciation, and constructive work.⁶ Gandhi tried to translate this order of the Trappist monks into practice for preparing grounds for social reconstruction. Primarily his idea of setting up an Ashram was to train cadre and provide a rehabilitation centre for *satyagrahis* who were participating in the movement against anti-Indian discriminatory laws in South Africa.⁷ But before proceeding towards this broader goal, *Indian Opinion* was started in 1903 to express the views and conditions of Indians to educate masses through this magazine. The magazine also aimed at consolidating the Indian community to serve them. In this process he also associated many non-Indian friends like Henry Polak, Josheph Doke, and Albert West with whom he worked for his mission. But after sometime it faced financial crises and, in order to cope with the crises, it was later shifted to Phoenix.

The Phoenix Settlement

The Phoenix Settlement, which was started in 1904⁸ to translate the idea of community life for social reconstruction, was an effort to reorganise *Indian Opinion*, a weekly journal published in South Africa by a Gujarati gentleman as it was running in loss since its first issue.⁹ It was run on a cooperative basis. The basic idea was to start farming in isolated areas and attending to the work of the press in their spare time at the lowest wage for subsistence and simple maintenance of the workers of the press. But to start work in an area uninhabited and thickly overgrown with grass infested with snakes was a difficult proposition and a kind of test of endurance. It imbibed insistence and commitment to self-help with a clear intention to live and die at Phoenix, if necessary. Gandhi was of the view that without a communication network it would be difficult to mobilise the people for struggle for a broader goal of social change and therefore publication of *Indian Opinion* was considered as one of the effective measures to educate the concerned masses.¹⁰

The Phoenix Settlement, which was considered as a religious institution, progressed till 1911. The advent of passive resistance widened its horizon and made religion an actor to “link between different religions and realise their essential unity.”¹¹ Gandhi’s objective of launching protest and civil disobedience movement, which was also known as nonviolent passive resistance (later termed as Satyagraha), had the limited objective of ending racial discrimination. Thus his movement was confined to and supported mainly by Indian immigrants who dominated the non-White middle class in South Africa. Gandhi realised the characteristic feature of this class, namely that they would not take part in any Satyagraha unless they would feel confident that there was an institution to take care of their family if they were arrested. Since they were Hindu, Hindu religious and moral overtone was a necessity for such an institution.

The Tolstoy Farm

Another practice in South Africa was the Tolstoy Farm which was established on 30 May 1910 spread over 1100 acres, one mile away from Lowley railway station and twenty-one miles from Johannesburg. Mr Kallenbach bought this farm and "gave the use of it to *Satyagrahis* free of any rent or charge."¹² The basic objective of establishing the Tolstoy Farm was threefold:

- (a) to live together with *Satyagrahis* and lead a religious life;
- (b) self-purification and penance for final campaign, which was launched in 1913 and ended in 1914; and
- (c) to prosecute a long protracted struggle.

This Farm was designed to settle and support livelihood for *Satyagrahis* and their families. In order to keep up this struggle it was necessary to support them when they are imprisoned and even after their release. Common kitchen, self-service, and common menus were the basic features with self-reliance motives, while alcohol, smoking, etc., were prohibited. The struggle continued for eight years and a larger turn-out for the final campaign could be possible because of the Tolstoy Farm.¹³

The basic code of conduct towards self-reliance of the farm residents was developed in due course of time, which was of self-imposed nature. Self-service was adhered as the guiding principle to the possible extent for farming operations, construction of building and working in the workshops. There was consensus to forgo meat but to refuse admission of non-vegetarians to the farm was absolutely out of the question, as the movement had been organised on behalf of all the classes of Indians, including Christians and Muslims.¹⁴ Thus group cohesiveness with acceptable variability and emphasis on transformation of individual leading to collective consolidation of social forces against injustice of racial discrimination and for reconstruction of society remained the basic features and the yardsticks of the success of the farm.

PRACTICES IN INDIA

In order to continue his practices of community life and struggle in India also, Gandhi started translating his previous experiences through various forms of practices and activities. Gandhi landed in India in 1915 with his experience of nonviolent struggle and *Satyagraha* in South Africa, which was basically against racial discrimination, which Gandhi took as an insult to the Indian race. However, his experience of the struggle brought the fact home that the weapon, which petty bourgeois could use against the mightily British Empire to resist its aggressive posture was nonviolent passive resistance. This, thus, remained the focal point of his movement—political,

social, and religious— hereafter. After reaching India, Gandhi's first major involvement was his travelling throughout the country so as to understand Indian society. This task was undertaken as advised by Gokhale. In this phase, he got involved in Champaran farmers movement against injustice and laid the foundation of anti-British struggle which was subsequently known as the Gandhian movement. In Champaran he courageously defied the order of the British government which banned his entry into Champaran, strictly in the limit of the British legal framework and became a hero in the eyes of thousands of the people who witnessed this defiance.

Gandhi established his first such Ashram at Kochrab after exchanging his views through correspondence and discussions with his friends. Many names were suggested for this ashram, such as Sevashram, Tapovan, Sadagraha, and finally it was decided to adopt "Satyagraha Ashram."¹⁵ This Ashram was later shifted to Sabarmati (Ahmedabad) for want of sufficient space. This Ashram was settled in Ahmedabad for three reasons. One, through Gujarati language, Gandhi thought, he could serve the country better. Secondly, as Ahmedabad was an ancient centre of handloom weaving, it was likely to be the most favourable field for the revival of the cottage industry of hand-spinning." And, thirdly, not only that he had a strong liking for Ahmedabad but also that this city, being a state capital, had many rich citizens from whom flow of funds could be expected.¹⁶ This Ashram was established with an objective "that its members should qualify themselves for and make a constant endeavour towards the service of the country, not inconsistent with the universal welfare."¹⁷ The Ashram had to observe eleven vows, such as truth, prayer, nonviolence or love, chastity, control of the palate, non-stealing, non-possession or poverty, bread labour, swadeshi, fearlessness, removal of untouchability, and tolerance. The main activities in the beginning were: worship, sanitary service, sacrificial spinning, agriculture, dairy, tannery, national education, Khadi, technical school, etc. Thus, in view of his experience in South Africa he broadened the scope of this Ashram but basically this was an ashram with a middle class ethos with dignity of labour along with religious and moral overtones.

In the process, although he acquired firm control over the independence movement, surprisingly enough, he, along with many of the top-ranking Congress leaders, unlike the Indian Revolutionaries (1897-1931), did not consider the contradiction between imperialism and colonial India as antagonistic. This non-antagonistic perception was evident in his early writings on various occasions. For example, he appealed on 16 December 1895 with a sense of pride to every British of South Africa as India's deliverer."¹⁸ On another occasion, he appealed the Indian masses to join Indian British Army in 1918 to support the British in the First World War expecting Swaraj as the reward for this support.¹⁹ It appears that Gandhi was applying this as a countervailing power tactic simply with a presumption of goodness of the British administration. But there was another intention also that he was bearing in his mind. He considered this

opportunity for imparting military training for the Indian masses to fight against the British and make an independent military for independent India.²⁰

Till then he had not reached at the level of nonviolence, which he subsequently could build up in the process of freedom struggle. That is why he was reflecting in terms of military training of the people of India. But when the Rowlatt Act was enacted, instead of any reward by the Imperial Legislative Council, followed by the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of unarmed men, women, and children and further an Indemnity Act to protect all the officers, who were party to the massacre, visualising further repression Gandhi warned revolutionaries.²¹ Then came the year 1919, which was a turning-point in the life of Gandhi. He proposed to launch a civil disobedience movement against the British before the Congress Working Committee. Realising the bitter response from the British for his service rendered during First World War, the Congress decided to launch a mass civil disobedience movement in 1920. The Committee not only endorsed his proposal but also authorised him to lead this movement. With this he acquired the leadership of the Indian National Congress and a firm control over the freedom movement. He remained the uncrowned king of the Congress till his assassination in 1948. However, during his struggle against British imperialism, apart from the mobilisation of masses, he had to face two major challenges *inter alia*: one, from Indian revolutionaries (1897 to 1931), and another on the issue of Hindu-Muslim unity.

Two years later, consequent upon the outbreak of violence at Chauri Chaura and the persistent influence of Gandhi the movement was suspended "to ensure the non-repetition of popular atrocities such as at Gorakhpur or hooliganism such as at Bombay and Madras."²² The Civil Disobedience Enquiry Committee also recommended waiting as the country was not ready to undertake any general mass civil disobedience,²³ although it was also argued that "the situation in the country as a whole was exceedingly favourable for the success of the civil disobedience campaign,"²⁴ but the movement was withdrawn all over the country on the pretext of the isolated Chauri Chaura incident in 1922 without consulting representatives from different provinces. Thus it was withdrawn in pursuit of maintaining relation of good faith with the British imperialism. The practical aspect of this withdrawal was that Gandhi was not ready to risk the British repression, which such incident might have provoked. His dictatorial attitude is reflected in his refusal to consult even his closest colleagues or the representatives of different provinces on the withdrawal of this movement.

Undermining other important events of the movement prevailing among masses, the option of compromise thus was kept intact. The strength of mobilisation witnessed in mass civil disobedience was also being applied as pressure tactics on the British in order to tilt the balance in favour of India. Moreover, Gandhi was not ready to allow revolutionaries to gain

strength out of this campaign for the use of armed struggle which might have acquired popular base among youth and safeguard the leading role of the Congress in the freedom struggle could have been difficult.²⁵ Indian revolutionaries could analyse and extrapolate their conclusion with regard to Gandhi's independence movement to logical end "either in some sort of compromise or in complete failure."²⁶ He emphasised further that "it does not firmly take any stand for independence. On the contrary, it craves for some share in power . . . it desires that administration is transferred from the Whites to Browns. It is far removed from the people and the possibility of its becoming repressive and exploitative after it is handed over the administration is very likely."²⁷ Yet another instance of passive but dictatorial attitude was witnessed when he threw the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 in the wake of Gandhi-Irwin Pact against the Civil Disobedience Movement. Gandhi wanted "full suspension of the activities of the revolutionary."²⁸

Finally, Gandhi withdrew the Civil Disobedience Movement without any substantial gain in impressing the British that he is the leader of the freedom movement and not either revolutionaries or Ambedkar. Dominion status was negotiated amidst his reiteration of refusal to attend the Round Table Conference unless the scheme of complete independence is considered and not less than that which was decided at the Karachi Congress in 1931.²⁹ The Congress resolved "to be a citizen, not in the Empire but in a Commonwealth as an indissoluble partnership but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another."³⁰ In spite of the Lahore resolution on "complete independence,"³¹ the Mahatma was striving for a settlement with Britain on the basis of Dominion Status.³²

This pact shocked even Gandhi's loyalists like Jawaharlal Nehru. It worked as an act of countervailing power as well as blunting the edge of the revolutionary spirit. Moreover, this Pact was to generate a false hope and prove to the ignorant masses of India that a compromise with the British was a possibility. However, Gandhi had his own perception about Indian masses and leaders and, therefore, he adopted the path of compromise and struggle side by side. To mobilise cadres he started many activities of constructive programmes and continued his struggle for freedom movement. Gandhi was disappointed when the leaders opted for council in impressing to achieve independence. Gandhi was very clear when he warned the leaders that Swaraj would never come through council, rather it would be suicidal for the Congress to devote its major time for council. He had the firm belief that Swaraj would be achieved only through raising all-round consciousness of the masses.³³ But unfortunately, his colleagues including Nehru summarily rejected his advice. Thus Gandhi lost his ground before his co-workers in his lifetime.³⁴ This became clear when Gandhi wrote a letter to Nehru of the issues on nation-building, which did not receive any importance, on 5 October 1945.³⁵

In spite of disillusionment from his colleagues as early as in 1934, he did not give up his work of social reconstruction. He opened Ashrams and institutions like Akhil Bharat Charkha Sangh, Akhil Bharat Gramodyog Sangh, Harijan Sevak Sangh, etc., organisations for constructive work programmes and propagated nonviolent agitation, dignity of labour, and discipline of austerity. He developed and dictated a code of conduct to be followed in Ashrams and institutions by the workers of constructive work programmes. In these matters his attitude was quite dictatorial. Gandhi himself emphasised: "I want to repeat what I have said time without number that, if you will be soldiers in my army, understand that there is no room for democratic organisation but there can be no democracy in its organisations, All India Spinners Association (AISA), Indian Village Industry Association (IVIA), and so on. In any army the General's word is law, and his conditions cannot be relaxed." Here he was trying to prepare cadres for nonviolent struggle against the British Empire, which would be solely guided by his dictates. It seems unfortunate that he undermined the issues of raising the level of consciousness of the dumb millions of Indians, who would have released the forces to a self-reliant growth.

PRACTICES AFTER GANDHI

After the assassination of Gandhi, Vinoba came out from the work at Ashrams to major issues of society. He, as a natural leader of the *Sarvodaya* movement, established *Akhil Bhartiya Sarva Seva Sangh* (ABSSS) in 1948. Identifying inequality as the major problem, he started a campaign of land gift from Pochampalli in Andhra Pradesh for redistribution of land among the poor. This campaign received wider attention and developed into *Bhoodan* and *Gramdan*. Vinoba started *Bhoodan* (land gift) movement. All the constructive organisations—*Charkha Sangh*, *Talimi Sangh*, *Khadi and Gramodyog Sangh*, *Harijan Sevak Sangh*, etc.—were integrated to work for the *Bhoodan* movement. The basic idea behind the merger was to integrate constructive work programmes with the movement and the programmes should come through movement, which may sustain for longer duration to rebuild society.

ABSSS for Social Mobilisation: Bhoodan-Gramdan

Bhoodan movement found its origin as a solution of fierce violent struggle carried out in Telangana. This region was badly trapped in the coil of violence where the poor peasants against landlords carried out armed struggle. Vinoba was aware of the issues of inequality in distribution of land and contradiction therein. He took initiatives with a view to resolving this conflict through gift campaign, that is, *Bhoodan*, which he started at Pochampalli in Telangana (Andhra Pradesh) on 18 April 1951. Since armed struggle for redistribution of land threatened many lives of landlords, they were restlessly in search of a mediator who could save their lives at the cost

of a few hectares of land. Vinoba intelligently handled this situation in favour of landlords and persuaded the peasants to agree with landlords to compromise on the issue of land gift. This event provided a clue to Vinoba to resolve the land issue through gift campaign. He then launched a land gift campaign, the response to which was very encouraging. It appeared, for many of us, as a formidable solution of this complicated problem of land. Gandhians took it as starting-point of a nonviolent revolution in such a situation when the government of the welfare state took up most of the constructive programmes. Therefore Gandhian activists did not see any possibility of initiating any other process of nonviolent movement other than Bhoodan. This movement was well-received by the people of the country. In a conference of the ABSSS at Sevapuri (U.P.), this movement was declared as the movement of the ABSSS. Instead of creating a separate organisation, the ABSSS and its activists were involved in this movement.³⁶ All other activities were sidelined, which ultimately were allowed to die their natural death. The second stage of Bhoodan was started as Gramdan (gift of village) at Mangroth (U.P.) on 24 April 1952 in order to dissolve ownership of land in the village assembly. "Gramdan was the foundation over which the superstructures of khadi and Shanti Sena had to be erected, thus completing the building of village swaraj."³⁷ Gradually this campaign of gifts reached the block, district, and state (Bihar) level. "The Gramdan movement has the objective of establishing a Sarvodaya order of direct and participatory democracy, which alone can ensure freedom, equality, and justice to all the members of the community."³⁸ Toofan Gramdan (Village gift storm) was started to achieve a wider coverage of gramdan. When the radical posture of Bhoodan-Gramdan reached its stagnation because negotiation and persuasion became almost difficult,³⁹ Vinoba launched Sulabh Gramdan (simplified gift) campaign after the Raipur Conference of the ABSSS in 1963 to attract donors to part with 1/20th land for Bhoodan. These campaigns reached their climax in 1969 at the Rajgir Conference of ABSSS in Bihar and in this conference Vinoba stopped his direct guidance and involvement in this campaign and asked the workers to continue their work on their own. Later, he developed the concept of *dan* into many other dimensions, such as, *shramdan* (gift of labour), *annadan* (gift of foodgrains), *sampattidan* (gift of wealth), *buddhidan* (dedication of one's mental abilities to the realisation of Sarvodaya ideals), and *jeevandana* (dedication of one's life to this cause).⁴⁰ Bhoodan-gramdan had basically three phases: (i) *prapti* (receipt of gift), (ii) *pushti* (follow-up for verification), and (iii) *nirman* (course of reconstruction).⁴¹ Most of the Gandhian organisations were actively engaged in constructive work of the Gramdan area. National organisations, which were working in this area, were Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial Trust, the Khadi and Village Industries Commission, and a host of other khadi organisations, Harijan Sevak Sangh, etc. These organisations opened their centres in Gramdan areas for constructive work related to village development.⁴²

Achievements

Bhoodan achieved its historic targets, which could not be found elsewhere in the world and many of us had reasons to believe that this campaign would be able to solve the complicated land problems through gift campaign. The Secretary of Bihar Bhoodan Yajna Committee, who has been closely associated to this movement of ABSSS, made an authentic documentation. The ABSSS received 41,838,624 acres of land out of which 1,879,576 acres could be distributed by the government. About 965368 families could be made beneficiary of this land redistribution campaign.⁴³ Till 1969 total number of villages recorded for *gramdan* were 1,40,000 out of which 13,059 villages were verified also, under *pushti* campaign. Blocks listed for *prakhaddan* were 1030 and 31 districts were put under *ziladan*.

Critical Appreciation

Initially it sounded as a panacea for most of the stalwarts of the peace movement to resolve the issues of inequality in distribution of land. It was achieved to the extent the land was received and distributed also. However, the task of distribution of land was given to the government, which caused alienation of the workers and the activities were identified by the government agencies and therefore any inconsistency emerging in this process went to the discredit to the Sarvodaya workers. Moreover, the vision of the *pushti* and *nirman* was yet to be developed adequately among the workers. Therefore, to sustain the *bhoodan-gramdan* movement became difficult even in the lifetime of Vinoba and he took retreat from Saharsa (Bihar). Later, this movement was reduced to insignificance and is not even being acknowledged as a measure of land reforms.⁴⁴ Moreover, noble idea of integrating all constructive programmes for *Bhoodan* and extract programme from the movement could not be realised. Thus effectiveness of the organisation was lost because of discontinuity.

While contemplating over success and failures of the practice of nonviolence, Vinoba himself raised many issues relating to assessment of the outcome. He reached the conclusion: "I came to a conclusion that our practice was too weak and imperfect... I had also a feeling that our practice in collective nonviolence did not rest on purely scientific basis. Had it been so, we would not have witnessed large-scale aberrations in the form of violence during 1942 movement and we would have achieved new global vision."⁴⁵ He appreciated *Satyagraha* and *Bhoodan* movements in which he found the seeds of world peace. As a believer of goodness of an individual which comes out through *Bhoodan* in the form of sharing with others, he established laboratories of practice of nonviolence for more dynamic and ideological depth away from the spirit of institutions: "These Ashrams are not institutions in the ordinary sense of the term. They are mere centres for training and education in nonviolence. This is common to all our institutions and organisations that we should have education and

training for the synthesis of self-knowledge and science.⁴⁶ Thus Vinoba established the following six Ashrams all over the country for this purpose with the elements of stages, continuity, and change: (i) *Samanvay Ashram*, (ii) *Maitri Ashram* (Friendship Hermitage of Abode of friendship), (iii) *Brahm Vidya Mandir* (Temple of Higher Science), (iv) *Vishva Needam* (Nest of world), (v) *Visarjana Ashram*, and (vi) *Prashthana Ashram*. Later, many such ashrams were established by other post-Gandhian activists also. In this exercise we are considering one of Vinoba's Ashrams—*Samanvay Ashram*, at Bodh Gaya, Bihar, and a few other ashrams—in order to comprehend the activities and impacts briefly. For this purpose we have mainly relied on available reports on various ashrams either in published from or unpublished records, news bulletins, letters and pamphlets from the organisation. I have also visited some of the ashrams as and when I got opportunities. However, proper investigation for case study could have provided better insight and proved more productive and analytical.

Samanvay Ashram

Vinoba established this Ashram on 18 April 1954 at Bodh Gaya in Bihar. This ashram was devoted to collective contemplation and action for social service and collective self-realisation. The inmates of the ashram pledged themselves to lead a balanced life through strict observance of the eleven vows of the Gandhian principles. Main activities of the ashram were related to agriculture, education on life-oriented, labour-stressed and realistic curriculum, seminars, social services, periodic camps for cataract medical aid, housing for poor, weekly visits of doctors to villages, besides other relief works.

Activities and Achievements

Agriculture and Dairy

About two acres of land of the Ashram has been brought under intensive cultivation after it was reclaimed. About 75 acres of land covered by jungle, 25 miles away from the Ashram, were reclaimed. Part of the land is used as campus of the school and remaining has been used for cultivation where two crops round the year are grown including fruits and vegetables. There is a dairy farm also with fifty cattle.

Education

This Ashram has been working for the last three decades. Two schools are run by the Ashram. One residential school was started in 1968 at the ashram itself and the other Samanvay Vidyapeeth, at Bagha with 25 children, 25 miles away from the Bodh Gaya. Now this centre has 100 children and 11 teachers apart from other staff. This centre imparts training to the children for agriculture, dairy, to attain skills in village industry, to

inculcate healthy habits of self-reliance, cleanliness and cooperative community life; to impart basic knowledge in social studies, mathematics, science and one language and adjust them with rural environment. There are 324 non-formal education centres spread over 160 villages. About 10,000 children get education correlated with productive labour. They are also engaged in regular manual labour, prayer, cultural programmes and social services. It is now planned to replicate such schools for other Bhoodan and backward areas. A self-sustained education and village development scheme—Tree world—has also been started in three villages.

Critical Appreciation

A brief assessment of the ashram activities suggests that agriculture has been a successful practice, and dairy has also brought a positive result. Education projects have touched a lively strength of 10,000 students. However, dropout is still a problem because of poverty. Tree World may be helpful for tackling this problem.⁴⁷ But talking with the present Director of the Ashram, Sri Dwarko Sundarani, it emerged that he was not satisfied with the achievements of the Ashram. Not that it has not worked for the people but it was established for social change and bringing the people living in subhuman condition to the mainstream of the dignified life of a citizen. He referred to a village Manfar—a gramdani village, which represents worst forms of backwardness, where the people are still struggling amidst subhuman condition of subsistence. However, he believes that an alternative education system may only start the process of change. The Ashram has been working in 160 villages with independent and alternative education system. Although it is getting financial support from the government also, it has its own syllabus developed by the Ashram. Ashram has been generating resources through agricultural activities and now added a Tree World education scheme for an autonomous sustainable education system away from the government resources. Sympathisers all over the world—Denmark, France, Tokyo, etc., have also given donations to carry out this activity. However, Sundarani was of the view that the workers of the Ashram did not take much interest and that has created difficulty in running it. Sometimes he felt frustrated and decided to give up this work also. Thus, despite working for 44 years, he is not satisfied with the achievements of the Ashram. This may prove as a silver lining for an alternative process of mobilisation for social change.

Tumulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sangh (TAGS)

After the Chinese aggression, it was decided that "the Sarvodaya workers should dedicate themselves to preparing the people of North East to face the Chinese aggression with nonviolent means as part of their Shanti Sena Campaign."⁴⁸ Jayaprakash Narayan as the President of the Shanti Sena Mandal, Sri Narain Desai as its Secretary, and Sarvodaya activists volunteered

for this purpose in Sarvodaya Conference 1962 at Vedchchi. Renowned Gandhian of the North East (NE) Amal Prabha Das of the Kasturba Trust suggested the name of Sri Ravindra Upadhyay, Madhav Rao Chauhan and others to go to an area near Bhutan border, closer to the present site of TAGS. Although, an Ashram, run by Dwarik Barua, was already working in this area. Towards this specific objective, TAGS was established in Assam in 1966 after *Bhoodan* and Gramdan movement of Vinoba to take initiative in order to promote cooperation, friendship, and peace among the people within and outside the region. This organisation has a threefold programme: (i) Gramdan for democracy, (ii) Khadi for development, and (iii) Shanti Sena for defence.

Vinoba's Bhoodan campaign brought many villages into the fold of Gramdan. In 1963 it was decided to concentrate his efforts on gramdani villages for carrying development works and activities. Out of 80 villages, 10 villages were recognised formally. These ten villages formed TAGS, and Kumarikata was made its centre. This Sangh received approval of Amal Prabha Das and Sarva Seva Sangh. A Gramdan Sangh was conceived consisting of gramdani villages of a block for taking up the task of development. Tihu, Boko, Narayanpur Gramdan Sangh and Tumulpur Anchalik Gramdan Sanghs were formed. TAGS is aimed at as a village centred development where villages should play a key role. Local people were involved in taking decisions regarding organisation. The executive committee of the organisation was formed with two members—President and Secretary of ten villages, who elect their President and Secretary for TAGS for three years.

Activities and Achievements

The main activities of TAGS were: (i) Liberating mortgaged land from moneylenders; (ii) Granary fund; (iii) community warehousing; (iv) irrigation projects; (v) agricultural extension programme: Balwadi, appropriate technology, technology intervention, etc.; (vi) relief work for flood, riots, and malaria hit areas; (vii) malaria eradication camp; (viii) Khadi Gramodyog Vidyalay; (ix) Khadi and other production activities; and (x) Sevika Niketan: self-help group in 23 villages.

Khadi production in Kawli started 1975 and ran quite successfully for a couple of years. But the Bodo militants burnt the Centre to ashes on 22 July 1989. This needs to be understood vividly. Later, in July 1997, the villagers handed over TAGS to army and relationship between villagers and organisation soured thereafter. As far as the irrigation projects are concerned, these villages received water from the channel after completion of the Matanga Irrigation project in 1978. It was stopped after three years and today the Kawli area again depends on monsoon for its cultivation. This again is a matter of further investigation to understand the socio-political relations of the village. Angarkata Satyagraha was successfully carried out by the TAGS for the rehabilitation of the refugees from the then

East Bengal (presently Bangladesh). However, in this process “the government and bureaucracy became uncooperative because a strong gramdan movement was going to reduce their control over these clusters of villages.”⁴⁹

Since this area has been in the trap of poverty, there was strong need for starting economic activities in order to improve the economic conditions of the poor of the area. The organisation was aware of the facts that “because of extreme poverty of the region unless some activities were undertaken for economic upliftment of the people it was not possible to carry out the Gandhian practice of Gram Swarajya.”⁵⁰ Spinning activity among the people was started. Initially spinning centres at six villages were established and later weaver training programmes as a part of Khadi and Village Industry Commission was started in the 1970s.

Although the report did not display cost structure, to respond to the question of its viability becomes difficult. Since the organisation could attract KVIC, AVARD, OXFAM, CAPART, Bread for World, Diakonisches Work, and generated employment, contribution of this centre through its existence for more than three decades in this area is obvious. Ravindra Bhai, a prime mover of this organisation, is however not very satisfied with the performance of this centre towards its objective and feels that still much more is desired. Because of many complicated regional problems, smooth functioning always remained a challenge before it. But the impact of his service on this area has been, in simple terms, very deep as well as extensive. He has been able to transform the psychology of the people—instead of despair, listlessness, and apathy, they find a new hope and a new confidence in their own power to better their own lot by their own effort.⁵¹ Khadi spinning has brought some remarkable positive results despite many hurdles. Still there is a long way to go towards reconstruction of village but it may be concluded that “the gramdan has at least prevented the transfer of village land to outsiders.”⁵²

Banvasi Seva Ashram

This Ashram was established in 1954 at Govindpur in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh for reconstruction and development of this region. Although activities of this Ashram originated from a famine relief camp initiated by the then Chief Minister of U.P., late Govind Ballabh Pant, the basic objective of this ashram was not only to carry out relief activities but also to widen the horizon of development through people’s participation on Gandhian lines of nonviolence struggle and reconstruction.⁵³

Activities and Achievements

This ashram covered many aspects of relief and reconstruction work. Following are the major activities of the ashram: (i) Relief Work, (ii) Land right and agricultural development, (iii) Employment and training,

(iv) Literacy and Education, (v) Health care, (vi) Village development and polity, and (vii) Social Justice.

Relief Work

As we have said earlier, relief work for famine was the point of origin for this ashram in 1952. This ashram has been working for famine relief in 1952, 1955, 1958, 1962 and 1966. There were 50 dining halls for serving food to 25 to 30 thousand famine victims. Besides this, there was distribution of medicine, clothes, and blankets also.

Land Rights and Agricultural Development

The Ashram helped in getting occupancy rights of land ranging from 5 to 15 acres to 50,000 families spread over 433 tribal villages of the district. Reclamation of land of the 11,750 families by levelling, moribuding, and drainage on 20,150 acres of land. About 1,190 bunds, 875 wells, and 350 lift irrigation schemes were created for water conservation and irrigation. About 45 lakhs plantation for fuel, fodder, fruits, and useful for domestic purposes were done in the farmers fields. Demonstration of good agricultural operations was conducted on the field of about 100 farmers. Dairy centres are run by the ashram and also by 200 families through ashram.

Employment and Training

Full employment for 600 persons and seasonal employment for about 5,000 people was created through land reclamation, water conservation, farm forestry, and khadi village industry. Khadi and village industry centres produce clothes of cotton, silk, woollen, breed mulberry, leather products, rope, oil, soap, herbal medicines, wood products, and repairing workshops. Training for carpentry, leather works, electricity, and diesel mechanics, weaving, typing, land surveying, legal assistance, for rural technical training.

Education, Health, and Drinking Water

There are eight centres for basic education called *Jeevanshala*, where 3,000 children of the poor families get education. About 14,000 children benefited through 400 non-formal education centres and about 1,07,500 adults were educated in 212 villages under total literacy campaign. About 42 centres for people's education through different kinds of libraries, were carried out as tola vachanalay (hamlet library) and jhola pustakalay (bag library). More than 25,000 people spread over 300 villages benefited from this scheme. In order to meet the challenges of drinking water problem, the ashram bore 160 tube wells and 1,800 wells. The Ashram runs one hospital and 10 health centres and could cater to the needs of 25,000 families spread over 300 villages. It also organised eye operation camps and benefited

about on an average of 1,750 persons every year. About 10,000 families have got benefits of family planning awareness programme.

Antyodaya for Social Justice

The ashram worked for the last man of the society through mobilisation of the people and legal aid. About 1,500 bonded labourers were liberated from the bondage of landowners cum moneylenders and 1,000 acres of land was liberated from the mortgage. Poverty eradication programmes were also carried out by the ashram and about 800 families got assistance through agriculture and village industry for their upliftment. The Ashram also provided legal assistance to the poor households. About 3,000 conflicts were disposed of. It has also moved the High Court and the Supreme Court to file public interest litigation for the rights of the villagers.

Polity for Village Development

The Ashram has initiated the process of Gram Swaraj in 300 villages through three-tier people's organisation. Ashram has already started 350 Gram Swaraj Sabhas at the village level. At the regional level, comprised of clusters of 20 to 30 villages, the Ashram has organised Regional Gram Swaraj Sabhas and at the Ashram levels the Central Gram Swaraj Samiti. For the development of village the Ashram has started Village Development Fund and the transaction has reached up to Rs 50 lakh.

Thus, if one looks at the achievement side, it speaks volumes of work done during its tenure. But the important point is that the report of 40 years of this Ashram seldom shares its difficulties and dependence on funding agency like other government agencies of development. Moreover, it does not reveal its resources and the cost benefit analysis of the Ashram works for its sustainability. Therefore without going to the field for direct case study, it appears difficult to deduce its strength for replication and social reconstruction for nonviolent economy and polity.

Gram Bharati Sarvodaya Ashram

This Ashram was established at the initiative of Dharendra Majumdar and Acharya Rammurti in 1962 for village reconstruction and development activities in Simultala, Jhajha block of the then Munger (presently Jamui) district of Bihar. Initially this Ashram was established as an extension service centre of Shram Bharati, Khadigram (Jamui), which was started by Majumdar in 1951 for carrying out the work of cadre building for Sarvodaya movement. Shivanand Bhai, who was a trainee of Gram Rachna Vidyalay Khadigram, was entrusted to work for this centre. After 15 years it got its legal status in 1977 when it was registered under the Society Registration Act 1860 to pursue its activities of Gram Swaraj. The Ashram has presently 50 trained workers at different centres and part-time teachers. Whole-timers are paid subsistence ranging from Rs 700 to 1,800 per month.

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However, part-timers are paid Rs 200 to 300, besides other facilities including accommodation.⁵⁴

It generates funds from its own resources. It has general, reserve, and revolving funds, J.P. Kosh (funds), Vikas Kosh, Credit Market Kosh, Gram Kosh, Mazdoor Kalyan Kosh, Vehicle and other Fixed Kosh, earmarked grant fixed assets funds, All-India Handicraft Board, sale and proceeds, saving and hire and purchase, income from agriculture and horticulture of Ashram, bank interests, donations, etc. It has also received funds from internal and external agencies. It received funds from OXFAM (UK), Council for the Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART), Khadi Village Industry Commission, Bread for the World (Germany), Catholic Relief Services, Foundation for Rural Recovery and Development, Bihar Relief Committee, South Asia Partnership, Cardinal League and its Endeavours (Canada) and Ministry of Education and Social Welfare, Government of India, etc.⁵⁵

Activities and Achievements

The Ashram started working in the villages of Jhajha, Chakai, and Sono blocks of Jamui district where Bhoodan and Gramdan played a very important role.⁵⁶ Gram Bharati received (*prapti*) 1,052 villages from the said block in Gramdan out of which 589 villages were confirmed (*pushti*) and in 413 villages reconstruction (*nirman*) programmes were started. Initially works were started to: (i) form Gram Sabha in Gramdani villages, (ii) liberate the people from police and litigation, and (iii) mobilise the people for reconstruction of villages through *shramdan*. Gradually it developed eight local units of ashrams through training cadres in order to carry out the tasks. With the flow of funds from various agencies this Ashram started other works also.

The Ashram undertook the work of famine relief during the late 1960s.. It also started work for water conservation and reclamation of land. Development of agriculture and irrigation facility was extended through digging wells, providing seeds, fertilizers, and repayable loans to the small and marginal farmers. It has taken up a project for social forestry and plantation to maintain sustainable cultivation technique in the area and educate the people for the need to pursue the environment capital for future generation. Social employment opportunities were created for the landless poor households. Rehabilitation work for the victims of caste was also carried out. The Ashram has been organising Mahila Mandal and literacy campaign for the poorer of this area. About 311 villages of confirmed gramdani villages have been covered for organising Gram Sabhas and Mahila Mandals.

However, if one goes to the critical aspects of the Ashram, it was reported that the structure of gram sabha was loosely organised but improvement in the status of Scheduled Castes and Tribes, Minorities in

terms of untouchability but the exploitation was not appreciably reduced.⁵⁷ Village Development Fund by and large remained in a poor state. Because of the non-availability of the dedicated workers, the Ashram has failed to restructure the tribal economy through the forest management and with the involvement of the people.⁵⁸ Talking with the workers we could gather that there is lack of decentralisation, which led to a kind of family managed Ashram and second line of workers from the experienced were not trusted for the management of the Ashram. Consequently, many resources could not be used properly. Waste of cow dung from the dairy is one of the examples in the context, which may provide a good source of non-conventional energy at larger scale and manure to the farms.

Other Forms of Gandhian Mobilisation

Many other practices are being carried out across the states of India by veteran Gandhians, like Manmohan Choudhary, Siddhraj Dhadha, Thakurdas Bang, Jagannathan, Acharya Rammurti, Nirmala Deshpande, Bimala Thakkar, Ganga Prasad Agrawal, and many others towards reconstruction of villages for gram swaraj. Besides these, practice of social change and popular movements such as Narmada Bachao, Himalay Seva, Azadi Bachao, Bachapan Bachao, Lok Samiti, Mahila Mandal and above all a national coordination front like National Alliance for People's Movement (NAPM) are being carried out with the like-minded organisations and activists. Nationwide protest against the negative dimensions of national policies such as liberalisation, globalisation, and privatisation has been launched by the NAPM. This could organise and bring like-minded people together for peaceful democratic mobilisation.

Other organisations, although not exactly in the Gandhian fold, have been working for social reconstruction be on Gandhian lines. Practice of Swadhyaya Movement to create impersonal property for the welfare of the society through different creative packages with spiritual overtones has also been one of the examples under the leadership of Pandurang Athvale Shastri. Activities like Yogeshwar Krishi, Matsyagandha, Yogeshwar Upvan, Amritalayam, Sanket, Yantra Jigyasa, Goras, Patanjali Swasthya Kendra, etc., are being carried out by the Swadhyaya Movement.⁵⁹ Another example could be of AWARE from Andhra Pradesh under the guidance of P.K.S. Madhavan. Sulabh Movement to liberate scavengers may also be an example in this context.

Imperatives and Options

In India we have many such practices and their results. Since the ages of Vedas, traversing through Buddha and Kabir, Gandhian insight and approach to build a nonviolent and peaceful progressive society is hence in this continuity and tradition. It is a combination of ideals and practical experiences with a mix of traditional and modern articulation of knowledge

that he gathered during his practices in his lifetime—in South Africa and in India as well in order to present an alternative path of development. Gandhi internalised the outcome of practices in the east and west best suited to the interests of the humanity and developed a method of simple living and high thinking in view of the forthcoming crisis of the modern path of industrial development. He brought saintly ideals for the use of social transformation and reconstruction, which were earlier practised, for individual emancipation.

The assassination of Gandhi was the worst setback that India suffered in her efforts of reconstruction of society, although this process of counter development was felt during the lifetime of Gandhi himself and later it remained a misnomer. Indian government did not adhere to the Gandhian approach to development and change. Consequently India fell in the trap of unemployment and poverty and misery and could not achieve complete independence as visualised by Gandhi. Rather she proceeded on the way to lose even political independence gradually and caught in the coil of non-development dependence syndrome. Planning and development continued at the tune of industrialism against which Gandhi warned time and again. Unfortunately, it remained unheard of and lip-service to mark the respect to Gandhi was continued. "Had it been allowed to follow the path perceived by Gandhi and others, that is technological syndrome for full employment based on available local regional natural endowment in a fully decentralised democratic set-up, it might have gone through a process, which eventually would have resulted in its getting separated from imperialism."⁶⁰

However, the Gandhian tradition did not die after his assassination.⁶¹ Vinoba took over this task of social reconstruction. He launched Bhoodan-Gramdan movements which were remarkable for sometime but finally it lost its ground as it was not planned comprehensively for prapti, pushti, and nirman. There was a time gap among the stages of these activities. Moreover, since Vinoba diverted all the cadres of ABSSS towards this practice, other practices did not have a chance of recovery after the collapse of the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement. This tradition of Gandhian practice to transform individual and society simultaneously still continued through different activities carried out by Ashrams. Going through a brief case study of a few Ashrams, we saw that Ashrams have been doing their best to achieve the ideals of progressive society perceived by Gandhi and Gandhian. It has been doing commendable relief services to their limits. The Ashrams could explain their activities to reconstruct the society on Gandhian lines under the broad banner of Sarva Seva Sangh all the regional organisations and institutions worked to restore peace and minimise contradictions in the society. Bhoodan-Gramdan got a larger cover but it could not be sustained because of inherent internal contradictions. It was perhaps the only practice that was widely spread to change property relations through religious passion of gift in Indian traditions. But it was lost in mid-way because of half-baked plan of the land gift strategy. This

campaign received severe criticism from the Left. Since then, no such radical issues as land relations was taken up by their followers. Land gift movement gradually went into the hands of government and no more remained a movement.

Other issues of social reconstruction were also taken up by the Ashrams but that could not be sustained due to lack of committed lot of activists. New generations could not be attracted for this virtue. Moreover, the activities of Ashrams were mainly dependent on financial support either from the government or other funding agencies and therefore the Gandhian thrust of self-sustained spirit was lost. In this process employment to activists was generated but the cadre building for movement could not be realised to sustain reconstruction efforts for the society. Non-governmental organisations have also been working for the reconstruction of the society. However, many of them could not produce minimum expected results, they rather created a syndrome of dependence paradigm.⁶² Still there are a few committed NGOs which work for the reconstruction of society within their limits. But to initiate a self-sustaining process of social reconstruction is still far away from the main activities of the NGOs. An initiative to co-ordinate all scattered micro-level efforts of mobilisation under a banner of the National Alliance of People's Movement (NAPM) has been taken up, but there is a long way to go. Nonviolent process of mobilisation has contributed significantly to widen the network but the foundation is yet to take shape.⁶³ Thus there is an imperative to evolve a kind of communication skill which may touch the heart and mind of the people. This needs a proper understanding of the people, particularly of deprived sections, who may come forward for the second stage of mobilisation.

We see that many practices have been carried out along Gandhian lines inside and outside the Gandhian fold and organisations. But the effectiveness in terms of their outcomes is yet to be significant. Replications of smaller practices are still to be extended and confirmed to the extent of generalisation at the macro level. Moreover, dependence of most of the NGOs on funding agencies for their financial support has thwarted the spirit of self-sustenance and, therefore, independence to work for village reconstruction has been lost in the midway. In this process, most of the NGOs have lost their posture and even sense of protest against the capitalist path of development and have adopted the reformist approach.

If we recapitulate the basic objectives behind the setting-up of Ashrams, they were established with an objective to build cadre for protracted struggle for the resistance and reconstruction so that "its members should qualify themselves for and make a constant endeavour towards the service of the country, not inconsistent with the universal welfare."⁶⁴ A student of social science finds it difficult to reach a definite conclusion on the basis of the given facts. The question still remained unanswered whether the Gandhian practice is replicable. But at the same time, dealing with the diagnosis of the economy of the country and warning about global macro

reality by Gandhi about the consequences of industrialism of the world development, it may be said that Gandhi comes in the realm of strong hypotheses. Repeated practices after taking lessons from the practices that have been carried out by different agencies irrespective of recognition from the Gandhian fold may provide a scientific generalisation of power. Findings of the practices also suggest that new idioms, communication skills, and symbols required to attract youth. However, unless it is practised at the macro level of the economy by the society, it would not be scientific to discard it as an alternative path of development either. But the risk of misappropriation is also a big challenge. Major tasks, however, are to repose confidence in the wisdom of the people and consolidation of their practice and strengths and understand them in their idiom and language. Once they come forward for their consolidation, the practices may take their shape, which could be modified further in the light of their experiences towards the problems and solutions as their own, they would no longer remain a bare object but would transform themselves as subject and with their active participation they would make their destiny. This may sound prophetic but the history suggests that the people have changed the course of history and created institutions for their support towards people-centred system and development.

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Human Rights: A Gandhian Perspective

M.L. Sharma

THE ENGLISH DICTIONARY defines human rights as rights held to be claimable by a living person. In fact, man has some rights which are considered inalienable, inherent, fundamental, basic, and, above all, universal ones and the enjoyment of which is the foundation of Freedom, Justice and Peace in the world. However, history has proved that man has not been allowed to enjoy these rights freely and fairly. The reasons for these could be various, such as political, social, economic, cultural, administrative, etc. The misuse or abuse of power and authority duly vested with the organs of the State or even other institutions may be the main cause for such denied enjoyment of rights. The French Declaration of the rights of man and citizen of 1789 explains: "The aim of all political associations is the conservation of the natural and inalienable rights of man. These rights are: liberty, property, security and resistance to oppression." The French Declaration announced a number of other rights for people and they were:

- ★ all men are born and remain free and equal in their rights;
- ★ all men are equal before law;
- ★ all men should have the freedom from arrest; and
- ★ all men are innocent until they are proved guilty.

The Declaration made clear the definition of human liberty, that is, freedom to do anything which is not harmful to others. It has been observed that the Magna Carta of 1215 in England also laid the foundation of liberties. In this respect the Magna Carta and the Habeas Corpus Act and the Bill of Rights, 1689, have been precursors in the formulation of human rights. The American Declaration of Independence says: "... all men are

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created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." While the French Declaration laid cardinal importance on liberty, property, security, the American Declaration enumerates three rights, namely the right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness as the most important. The history of human rights in India is chequered and quite long and civil rights to Indians were not available. We had a culture where "Sati," child marriage, polygamy, polyandry, etc. were rigid. Caste system and practice of untouchability were very common. There was also slave trade. Lord Cornwallis abolished slave trade in 1789. Warren Hastings took several measures to prevent human rights violation. Lord Bentinck in 1829 prevented the burning and burial of widows alive. "Sati" was held illegal. Lord Dalhousie during the period 1848-1884 brought in Factory Legislation forbidding children below 7 years from employment and reducing the working hours of women and children. Caste Disabilities Act 1850, Civil Marriage Act 1872, Child Marriage Restriction Act 1929, etc. were some of the legislative measures taken to prevent human rights violations.

With the establishment of the United Nations in 1945 and the adoption of around 90 UN human rights instruments during the last more than 50 years, an era of human rights has dawned. The post-World War history is marked by the concerns of promoting the universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion. The catalogue of human rights is expanding with every passing year. There are UN Human Rights treaties and declarations of the civil and political rights, social, economic and cultural rights and the rights of groups, children, women, refugees, migrant workers, torture, elimination of racial discrimination based on caste, colour, and creed. The UN role in setting norms and standards and evolving procedures and mechanisms to secure the implementation of human rights is both historic and revolutionary. In short, it can be stated that the UN has made human rights the common language of humanity and ultimate norms of all politics.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights by the United Nations proclaims that all human beings "are born free and equal in dignity and rights and that everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in the Declaration without distinction of any kind such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status." In 30 Articles the Declaration elaborates the human rights. The Preamble to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights shows clearly the highest aspirations of the common man, namely his rights and freedoms which he has to secure for himself and for others in the world community. The Declaration further adds:

... this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual

and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

In simple words, human rights are universal moral rights. They belong to everybody because they are human. By definition, they are not earned, bought, or inherited. They are inherent in human dignity. They are inalienable. These rights are available to all persons irrespective of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status (Article 2 of the Universal Declaration). Furthermore, they are universally applicable to all persons. In other words, non-discrimination is an important principle of contemporary human rights. However, it must be noted here that these rights are not absolute or unlimited. Some of them are liable to be suspended during war or emergency. Justifiable and reasonable limitations may be imposed on their exercise by the states which are necessary to protect national security, public order, public health, or morals, or the rights and freedoms of others.

In this respect it may be mentioned that Indian Constitution ensures equality before law (Article 14), protection of life and personal liberty (Article 21), right against arbitrary or illegal arrest (Article 22), right to assemble (Article 19), etc. These provisions, read with several other provisions in the Criminal Procedure Code, form the basis of human rights protection in our country. The Parliament enacted the Protection of Human Rights Act 1993 under which a National Human Rights Commission, State Human Rights Commission and Human Rights Courts were established for better protection of human rights and for matters connected therewith. This Act defines human rights as "the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution which were embodied in the International Conventions and enforceable by Courts in India." Over a period of years, the National Human Rights Commission as well as the State Commissions have been taking several measures to arouse awareness about human rights and their enforcement. The International Workshop on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights and the rights to development in the Asia Pacific region held in Yemen in February 2000, has laid emphasis on human rights. The Universal Declaration on human rights states the ideal of free human beings without fear and want, enjoying freedom. This ideal is achievable only when the conditions in which they live are conducive, in other words, the environment and the conditions in social, cultural and economic, civil and political rights. These development policies have to be devised by the political executive which in a Democracy has a greater responsibility. Thus we see democracy, development, and protection of human rights and their fundamental freedoms go together. In fact, they are interdependent and complementary.

It is now more than 50 years since the UN Charter of Human Rights came into being. The UN Charter is quite justifiably hailed as one of the most significant steps which mankind took towards a just social order. The Charter has generated world-wide interest and considerably influenced the various governments, and non-government agencies and groups in developing a new consciousness about the right of every living being to an honourable environment which will facilitate its existence in conformity with the right of other beings to exist and, more so, to co-exist.

Mahatma Gandhi, the man of the Millennium, has been recognized as one of the champions of human rights. His work in South Africa initially and later back in India, created a new era of hope to millions of fellow human beings to whom basic human rights were denied under dehumanising circumstances perpetrated by oppressive forces of various kinds, including social, political, and economic. To him, the violation of human rights was identified as a crucial area for creating awareness in the minds of the victims as well as their perpetrators. However, with Gandhi, it became a highly organized movement for regaining the voice of the suppressed humanity. He asked the people to be bold enough and fearless to fight for their rights. In this respect two historic incidents in 1893 in South Africa and in 1956 in USA, are living examples which undoubtedly prove that Mahatma Gandhi and Mrs Rosa Parks fought for the rights of millions of people on this universe and both changed the course of history of civil rights movement for human rights all over the world. The eviction of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi from the train at Pietermaritzburg for having dared to travel in a first-class compartment, was a unique incident. Similarly, in 1956, Mrs Rosa Parks had stoutly refused to vacate a seat she had been occupying in a public bus in Montgomery and accepted to be fined for the refusal to obey the order to vacate the seat being a Negro woman. These two identical incidents had enormous impact on humanity's march to ensure equal civil rights rise in revolt when basic human rights or freedom are violated or denied to the poorer masses. Accordingly, Gandhi's first remarkable experience compelled him to think over that the individual's right of equality should not be segregated on the basis of one's colour or race. Thus the South African period is an important landmark in Gandhi's life as it resulted into the transformation of a mild youth into a fighter for social justice and eradication of racial discrimination as he had the taste of his first experience of racial discrimination as soon as he entered the land of South Africa. As stated above, he was thrown out of the first class compartment only on the basis of the colour of his skin. This, however, was not the end of his ordeal, worse was yet to come when he was not allowed to sit inside the stage coach and beaten by the coachman mercilessly without any fault. Besides, he was humiliated by the magistrate of the court in Natal when he was asked by the magistrate to remove his turban. He was taken aback, his whole enthusiasm had dampened and ultimately refused to comply the order and preferred to leave the court.¹

In his autobiography Gandhi explains: "I began to think of my duty. Should I fight for my rights or go back to India, or should I go on to Pretoria without minding the insults, and return to India after finishing the case? It would be cowardice to run back to India without fulfilling my obligation. The hardship to which I was subjected was superficial—only a symptom of the deep disease of colour prejudice. I should try, if possible, to root out the disease and suffer hardships in the process. Redress for wrongs I should seek only to the extent that would be necessary for the removal of the colour prejudice."² Anyhow, Gandhi determined to stay in South Africa to fight for social justice and basic human rights. In this respect, one of the prominent biographers of Gandhi comments: "... from that hour he refused to accept injustice as a part of the natural or unnatural order in South Africa. He would reason; he would plead; he would appeal to the better judgement and the latent humanity of the ruling race. He would resist, but he would never be a willing victim of racial arrogance. It was not so much a question of redeeming his own self-respect as that of his community, his country, even of humanity."³ In this way, Gandhi remained about 21 years in South Africa, united Indians of all faiths—Hindus, Mussalmans, Parsis, and Christians—to discuss ways and means to protect and safeguard the basic human rights which were denied to them by the white ruling people there. As a matter of fact, most of them had been brought into South Africa by Europeans under a system or bond of indenture, whereby they were slaved at the places of plantations and mines. They were subjected to many hardships and to imposed unnecessary and heavy taxes. Besides, Gandhi experienced the dehumanising face of untouchability as practised by the white rulers in South Africa. Just as untouchables are relegated to remote houses of a town or a village in India, similarly Indians were given coolie locations or ghettos. There was a criminal negligence of the municipality also. However, Gandhi fought legal cases and got the municipality to correct its wrongs done to the so-called untouchables. Accordingly, South Africa not only developed the political acumen of Gandhi but also made him more responsible and active for bringing a complete transformation in his personal life by developing his qualities.⁴

It is now clear that Gandhi's struggle in South Africa against the violation of human rights and exploitation was not a peculiar phenomenon of that country alone. It had its impact on the Blacks and native population living there, who are still groaning under the greater malaise of racial discrimination—apartheid. It has taken a long time for them to stand and fight against it and gratefully they have acknowledged that they were influenced by Gandhi's approach to fight against injustice. Nelson Mandela's speeches are a living example in this respect. On one occasion Mandela expressed: "Under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian National Congress has developed a strong international outlook, with the elimination of colonialism and racism all over the world as the foremost concern and

established contacts with freedom movements in other countries."⁵ Further, his impact was not confined to South Africa only as Dr Martin Luther King also followed the Gandhian method of nonviolence against racial discrimination and segregation in the U.S.A. He expressed: "From my background I gained my regulating Christian ideas, from Gandhi I learnt my operational technique."⁶ Professor N. Radhakrishnan, a prominent Gandhian scholar, observes: "The twenty-one years Gandhi spent in South Africa offered valuable insights to Gandhi in familiarising himself with the inhuman and highly deplorable situations that existed outside, as well as helping him develop appropriate concepts and techniques of nonviolent defence. His decision to defy the most humiliating Asiatic Ordinance with nonviolent strategies which included suffering and readiness to tone the mistakes committed by others. Like a master craftsman he developed the various instruments of nonviolent resistance to evil. The struggle initiated by Gandhi for human dignity and freedom had not only lasting impact on South Africa and India but it left its imprint on human psyche and influenced freedom fighters, human rights activists, all over the world."⁷ Similarly, the national movement led by Gandhi for various social causes like abolition of untouchability and Harijan rights for entry to temples were indeed very important milestones in the annals of human rights movement in modern India.⁸ As a matter of fact, this was a bold step taken by a man of strong convictions and determination.

The Gandhian initiative for human rights and justice stands out for the fresh set of strategies and attitudes which Gandhi brought in. Many could not understand what he meant when he asserted that a clear victory of satyagraha was impossible so long as there was ill-will. But those who believed themselves to be weak were incapable of loving. Let then our first act every morning be to make the following resolve for the day: We should not fear any one on earth. We should fear God only; We should not bear ill-will towards any one on earth. We should fear no injustice from anyone. We should conquer untruth by truth and in resisting untruth we should put up with all suffering.⁹

In respect of his approach and methods, Gandhi explains: "My mission is to teach by example and precept under severe restraint the use of the matchless weapon of Satyagraha, which is a direct corollary of nonviolence and truth. I am anxious, indeed I am impatient, to demonstrate that there is no remedy for the many ills of life save that of nonviolence. . . . When I have become incapable of evil and when nothing harsh or haughty occupies, be it momentarily, my thought—world, then and not till then, my nonviolence will move all the hearest of the world. I have placed before me and the reader no impossible ideal or ordeal. It is man's prerogative and birth-right."¹⁰

In this respect, it is important to mention here that the good of one and the good of all and vice versa as Gandhi advanced in his Sarvodaya is in

essence the spirit of humanism recast and remodelled along the Indian saying: *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. It also echoes Ruskin's *Unto This Last* from which Gandhi drew the humanistic spirit of Sarvodaya.¹¹ This signifies:

- (i) That the good of the individual is contained in the good of all.
- (ii) That a lawyer's work has the same value as the barber's, inasmuch as all have the same right of earning their livelihood from their work.
- (iii) That a life of labour, that is, the life of the tiller of the soil and the handicraftsman, is the life worth living.

Gandhi demonstrated all aspects of both individual and collective initiatives for the liberation of people from colonial rule through emphasis on the soul force as against the brute force of violence. The eternal warfare between truth and untruth, between good and evil in individuals, groups, communities and in nations is what Gandhi's life-long struggle symbolised. Freedom to Gandhi was a process of continuing quest rather than a final consumption. Independence to him was not an end but a means to freedom and self-rule. His concept of Swaraj went far beyond mere political independence.

In his struggle against colonial rule, Gandhi marshalled the allegiance of the helpless indentured and fear-stricken labourers in South Africa and the common people in India to a common cause, it was Swaraj, which meant "not the acquisition of authority by a few, but the acquisition of the capacity in the many to regulate authority when abused." This followed the logical corollaries to his approach—the struggle for the emancipation of the masses from the grind of hunger and unemployment and the tyrannies of castes and so-called religions which made bond-slave of the oppressors and the oppressed alike. He revolted against the pattern of technology that enslaved man and made him helpless robot. He crusaded against untouchability because it epitomised the cancer that ate into the social life of India. Even before the Karachi Congress, Gandhi wrote:

But the Swaraj of my dream recognises no race or religious distinctions. Nor is it to be the monopoly of lettered persons nor yet of moneyed men. Swaraj is to be for all, including the former, but emphatically including the maimed, the blind, the starving toiling millions.¹²

Later, on he added:

... the Swarajya of my dream is the poor man's Swaraj. The necessities of life should be enjoyed by you in common with those enjoyed by the princes and moneyed men. But that does not mean that you should have palaces like theirs. They are not necessary for happiness. You or I would be lost in them. But you ought to get all the ordinary amenities of life that a rich man enjoyed. I have not the slightest doubt that Swaraj is not Purna Swaraj until these

amenities are guaranteed to you under it. I do not know when we will win it but we have all to strive for it.¹³

A few days later he clarified his concept of "Poorna Swaraj" or complete independence as follows:

Poorna Swaraj—"Poorna" complete because it is as much for the prince as for the peasant, as much as for the rich land owner as for the landless tiller of the soil, as much for the Hindus as for the Mussalmans, as much for Parsis and Christians as for the Jains, Jews and Sikhs, irrespective of any distinction of caste or creed or status in life.¹⁴

There was no bigger crime against humanity than denial of human rights to fellow citizens. Denial of reality itself was an act of violation of what constitutes the core and the mirror of universal life.

Similarly, in Gandhi's concept of democracy, obligations took precedence over rights. Rights according to him followed as a corollary to obligations properly discharged. According to him, every individual was to act as a trustee for himself and be answerable to his own conscience and same should apply to his obligations to all around him whether in matters of political, economic, or social rights in the community. Gandhi knew that violence could lead but to greater violence and therefore is poor remedy for the abuse of rights and obligation by individuals or groups in the community.

It has been seen that there is a considerable influence of Gandhi in the various articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. For example, in its 30 Articles, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights defines those principles which are intended to offer a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations.

The first three articles proclaim that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights, are endowed with reason and conscience, should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood, and are entitled to all rights and freedoms without any kind of distinction. Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

Articles 4 to 21 spell out various civil and political rights, including those to freedom from slavery; from torture to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment; the right to recognition as person before the law and to equal protection by the law against abuse of rights; to freedom from arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile; the right to fair public hearing before an independent imparital tribunal; and the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty. Other civil rights include freedom from arbitrary interference with privacy, family, or correspondence; freedom of movement and residence; the right to nationality and asylum; the rights to marry and found a family; to own property; to freedom of thought, conscience, religion, opinion and expression; the right to peaceful assembly and association but equally that of not belonging to an association; and the right to take part in

the government of one's country and of equal access to its public service. Finally, "the will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of Government," which shall be expressed in periodic elections by universal suffrage and secret and free voting procedures.

Article 22 introduces a second group of articles defining various economic, social and cultural rights—those to which every one is entitled by virtue of his or her membership of society. Such rights, though indispensable for human dignity and free development of personality, rest on national and international effort within the limits of the organization and resources of each state. The rights inherent in Articles 22 to 27 thus include the right to social security; to work, under just and equitable conditions; to equal pay for equal work; to rest and leisure; to standard of life adequate for health and well-being; and the right to education, under defined conditions, and to participate in the cultural life of the community. The concluding articles (28 to 30) proclaim that everyone is entitled to social and international order in which the declarations and rights and freedom may be fully realized. Conversely, since everyone has duties to the community, the exercise of such rights and freedoms shall be limited only to laws designed solely to secure recognition and respect of the rights of others and to meet requirements of public order and the general welfare in a democratic society. No state, group, or individual may claim the right to destroy any right contained in the Declaration.

Accordingly, it is evident that Mahatma Gandhi opened up a new chapter in human history by offering a new set of thoughts and strategies steeped in human dignity. He also taught that any attempt to violate human rights is abominable and against natural justice and hence should be fought tooth and nail. His life and work in South Africa for twenty-one years and thirty years in India championing the cause of the down-trodden and oppressed who were segregated and ill-treated in the name of the dreaded apartheid inspired millions of freedom-loving citizens all over the world including the poet and social reformer Tolstoy. Gandhi demonstrated the work through his novel methods that what the weak and the suppressed need is courage of conviction to stand up and fight any unjust system. He clarified with telling effect that the weapon of the weak in this noble fight for social justice and equal rights is not any eternal weapon but soul force which is more powerful than even the atom bomb, and which in turn, will arm a nation or a person with the requisite courage to fight the forces which deny fellow human beings their rights to live in dignity.

In his fifty years of public life in three continents, Gandhi demonstrated the efficacy of the Buddhist teachings of respect for all living beings and human dignity which is impossible without compassion. And Gandhi emerged as the voice of the voiceless and inspired social reformers, political thinkers, and fighters for individual liberty all over the world.¹⁵

Among the notable streams of thought that influenced Gandhi are that of Thoreau and Emerson. From Martin Luther King and Khan Abdul

Ghaffar Khan to Julius Neyerere, Hochi Min, Bishop Desmond Tutu, Petra Kelley, Nelson Mandela and Daisaku Ikeda, there is a galaxy of men and women in different parts of the world who took a leaf from Gandhi to fashion their initiative for ensuring justice and fight discrimination in the name of colour and race. And with Gandhi the fight against Human Rights took a new turn. From violent methods, the movement turned to nonviolent tactic which Gandhi believed would be the weapon of the strong and not that of the weak.

No doubt, India has had a very rich heritage in the sphere of human rights movement which many countries of the world do not have, yet it is disappointing and disheartening to note that even after fifty years of India's independence and Universal Declaration of Human Rights, violation of human rights in various forms, shapes, shades and manners continue to happen in this country. In India, we are yet to eradicate the inhuman practice of untouchability completely despite stringent legislation. Even recently in Haryana a magistrate from reserved category was rebuked by an advocate by calling him a "chamaar." Besides, we are yet to eliminate the menace of child labour, child abuse, and bride burning, atrocities on weaker sections of society, violence against women, increasing incidents of demands of dowry, problem of prostitution, and many such other social evils. Hence we have to go a long way in creating a just society to ensure "all human rights for all." It is somehow possible if we adopt Gandhi's approach to "Sarvodaya" or Vinoba's call to "Antyodaya" carefully and seriously. A nonviolent approach based on truth, compassion, and love can solve many of our day-to-day problems and provide basic human rights to one and all. The only thing needed is the determination, integrity, and sincerity at all levels, otherwise the violation of human rights will continue for a time beyond our memory.

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Was Gandhi A Mystic?

IN RELIGION, FAITH rules the lives of men. It is because man puts faith in certain reality. But evidence to this reality is not seen. Religion acts as evidence to reality. When faith becomes sword, fanaticism oozes out. The consequences are crystal clear. It is faith that steers us through stormy seas, faith that moves mountains and faith that jumps across the ocean (see *Young India*, 24 September 1925). Without faith this world would come to naught in a moment. True faith is appropriation of the reasoned experience of people whom we believe to have lived a life purified by prayer and penance. Belief, therefore, in prophets or incarnations who have lived in remote ages is not an idle superstition but a satisfaction of an inmost spiritual want (*ibid.*, 14 April 1927). The teaching of religion is that faith leads to wisdom. The Hebrew Bible says, "the fear of the Lord leads to wisdom." The distinction between wisdom of philosopher and of the Prophet is that Prophet injects inputs in the name of unevidenced reality in man and tries to improve the moral strength in a fragile body while in the wisdom of philosopher man can look inward to recognise his capability for enlightenment. And this was what Gandhi adopted and believed in the divinity of man.

In the Indian setting every movement, when it gets a coat of moralist colour, slips into religion. The mighty Vedas and lofty Upanishads make every movement as a religious one. Every movement gradually slides from the twilight zone of philosophy into the twilight zone of religion.

The Vedas, true knowledge of philosophy, sprouted on Indian soil some five thousand years ago, still inspire human mind to speculate over truth. In the religious context to be more precise in the realm of philosophy-cum-theology any writer or a thinker who leans more on to the side of philosophy may be sidetracked, very often he may be considered a rationalist, if not an atheist or a heretic. This deprives him of adulation and admiration, love and affection. He cannot get these from masses. Though

Gandhi leaned more on philosophy, he kept the balance holding on the the ropes of religion.

Intellectual values importance for the uplift of human comfort dominated, while the mighty current in the realms of the Vedas and Upanishads turned to Atman and subsequently towards universal religion. The concept of *Atman* became the object of philosophical speculation. Refinement of soul at every stage of birth envisioned.

"Mysticism is not merely an imaginative thought about nature or about its forces or an emotional upsurge concerned more with the feelings than with the reality, that constitutes mysticism." The true meaning of the word "mysticism" derived from the Greek word "mustein" (R.D. Ranade, *The Conception of Spiritual Life in Mahatma Gandhi and Hindu Saints*, Gujarat Vidya Sabha, Ahmedabad, 1956, pp. 72-75). It means to close one's lips. If it is pushed further, it means realisation of God and enjoyment of God in silence. This stage of realisation of reality is not found in Gandhi. His enjoyment was not the bliss of the soul vision. His enjoyment was in refining the individual.

A mystic always remains dead to the world, because the core of his consciousness and daily life get shifted from the mundane world. In other words, a mystic's sole aim is to liberate the men from mundane things of the world and turn the latter's eye towards spiritual values. It is very easy to reach a wise man. Soul craves to be associated with the wise. It is the sceptic mind which stands in the way. It suspects the wise, frowns, and scorns the wise. Reasons become futile. It cannot liberate the mind from scepticism. Not only Gandhi recognized these spiritual values but took cognizance of the limitations of man. He wanted to harness these spiritual values in man to serve his fellowmen better. The quantum of good in man constitutes spiritual values. These positive qualities in man have to be utilised in politics and for social reforms.

Gandhi says: "I have never described myself as a sannyasi. Sannyas is made of sterner stuff. I regard myself as a householder, leading a humble life of service and, in common with my fellow-workers living upon the charity of friends. . . . The life I am living is entirely very easy and very comfortable, if ease and comfort are a mental state. I have all I need without the slightest care of having to keep any personal treasures" (*Young India*, 1 October 1925).

He also said: "My loin cloth is an organic evolution in my life. It came naturally, without effort, without premeditation" (*ibid.*, 9 July 1931).

Gandhi never preached for a Guru nor did he try to become a disciple of any individual, however great he might be. Neither did he become a Guru. He advocated detachment from material things and enjoyment in renunciation. He felt that an ideal Guru is not available. To make an ordinary average individual an instrument in service of man does not require that much of spiritual discipline which a mystic demands from his disciples.

Gandhi regarded his "Mahatmaship" as an oppressive burden. He said: "I do not feel like being one (a Mahatma). But I do know that I am among the humblest of God's creatures" (*Young India*, 27 October 1921). "Often little has deeply pained me, and—there is not a moment I can recall when it may be said to have tickled me" (M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: Or the Story of My Experiments with Truth*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1927).

Close associates of Gandhi believed that the aura around Gandhi was due to his mysticism. To them Gandhi's spiritual experience began from early in life and culminated towards the end of his career. They traced three stages in support of the argument. First, the inner voices which he had been uttering. It was compared to Ananta, sound of mystical experience. The second indicated the message he received from the inner voice. He had never made it clear what the message was. The third was his declaration of message.

Gandhi never experienced any spiritual experience akin to mystic experience, neither was he a blind believer in religion nor did he gain strength through religion. His strength was his faith in his masses. Gandhi read much about religion. But he never tried to come on to the start line to search God. Had he been in this direction, he would have been a Ramana Maharishi or a Ramakrishna Parmahansa.

He never believed in any Sadhus bordering on mystics. He was totally influenced by the people like Tolstoy, Ruskin, and Raichandra.

Godliness is what makes man to be in communion with God, which is one of the important aspects of a mystic. Gandhi is different from men who are God lovers and mystics whose Godliness makes them see through themselves. In practice, Gandhi urged the importance of "infinite patience and inward longing." Towards the end of his life, he told a sincere atheist who come to him: "Everyone who wants a true life has to face difficulties in life, some of which appear insurmountable. At that time it is faith in God that is Truth alone, that will sustain you. The fellow feeling which makes you feel miserable because of your brother's misery is godliness. You may call yourself an atheist, but so long as you feel akin with mankind you accept God in practice. I remember clergymen who came to the funeral of the great atheist Bradlaugh. They said they had come to pay their homage because he was a godly man (Gora, *An Atheist with Gandhi*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1951, pp. 30-31).

Conscience, the divinity in man and the recognition of heeding to the dictates of the divinity in man are three stages, which were the craving of a mystic in Mahatma Gandhi. Putting faith in the divinity of man became beacon light to Gandhi. This aims at both the inner voice and Inner Light in him. Any deviation from it is repellent to him. Always conscience guided him.

As early as 1916, Gandhi declared: "There come to us moments in life when about some things we need no proof from without. A little voice

within us tells us, You are on the right track, move neither to your left nor to your right, but keep to the straight and narrow way" (*The Leader*, December 1916). In 1920 he wrote that there are moments in life when we must act, even though we cannot carry our best friends with us; the "still small voice" within us must always be the final arbiter when there is a conflict of duty. He claimed that having made a ceaseless effort to attain self-purification, he had developed some little capacity to hear correctly and clearly the "still small voice within" (see Pyarelal, *The Epic Fast*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1932, p. 34).

In 1925 he claimed that though many say they speak under the authority of the inner voice, not all will be able to substantiate the claim. Before one is able to listen to that voice, one has to go through a long and fairly severe course of training, and when it is the inner voice that speaks, it is unmistakable. The world cannot successfully be fooled for all time.

In 1933, he wrote: "For me the Voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth or the Inner Voice or 'the Still Small Voice' mean one and the same thing. I saw no form. I have never tried, for I have always believed God to be without form. But what I did hear was like a Voice from afar and yet quite near. It was an unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible. I was not dreaming at the time I heard the Voice. The hearing of the Voice was preceded by a terrific struggle within me. Suddenly the Voice came upon me. I listened, made certain it was the Voice, and the struggle ceased. I was calm. The determination was made accordingly, the date and the hour of the fast were fixed. . . . I have no further evidence to convince the sceptic. He is free to say that it was self-delusion or hallucination. It may well have been so. I can offer no proof to the contrary. But I can say this, that not the unanimous verdict of the whole world against me could shake me from the belief that what I heard was the true Voice of God." He not only denied that there was a question of hallucination but even claimed to have stated a simple scientific truth, to be tested by all who have the will and the patience to acquire the necessary qualifications.

You must try to listen to the inner voice but if you would not have the expression "inner voice," you may use the expression "dictates of reason," which you should obey, and if you will not parade God, I have no doubt you will parade something else which in the end will prove to be God, for, fortunately, there is no one and nothing else but God in this universe.

He declared that conscience is the voice of God, the final judge of the rightness of every deed and thought. He wrote in 1919 that "there are times when you have to obey a call which is the highest of all, that is, the voice of conscience, even though such obedience may cost many bitter tears, and even more, separation from friends, from family, from the state to which you may belong, from all that you have held as dear as life itself. For this obedience is the law of our being."

Further, in matters of conscience, the law of majority has no place. Repeatedly, in South African courts and subsequently in India, he appealed

to a higher court than courts of justice, the "court of conscience" that supersedes all courts. "The human voice can never reach the distance that is covered by the still small voice of conscience. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the still small voice within."

Certain aspects of Gandhi remained invisible to the lay man as well as to the intelligentsia. Hence the mystic hue on him still lingers.

ASHU PASRICHA

Preventing an Environmental Catastrophe

ALLEN HAMMOND, in his book *Which World? Scenarios for the Twenty-first Century*, visualizes a transformed world where corporate policy takes a green path, that public opinion crystallizes around a sheer sense of environmental commitment, that international treaties stabilise energy use, and that recycling eliminates waste. The rain-forests are saved, global climate preserved and biodiversity loss halted while the cities are reborn as hives of sustainable living. There can be no doubt that international commitment to significant change can be seen in such agreements as the Montreal Protocol, which seems to be successfully controlling ozone depleting chemicals, the Kyoto accords reducing emission of greenhouse gases, and the near-unanimous adoption of a treaty (pushed by 700 citizens' groups around the world) to ban landmines. To be sure, there are many forces for dramatic global transformation at work today but can they act fast enough to prevent an environmental catastrophe?

These and other related questions are being discussed and debated the world over by scientists, environmentalists, and others. The many environmental factors that will shape the future are worth examining since they are likely to profoundly affect the political and economic choices made by world leaders. Some of these factors like global warming and population-induced challenges to food production could lead to a dramatically altered world order in the new century.

Global Warming

The Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has predicted that we will see doubling of pre-industrial levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere by the year 2050, raising global temperatures from one to three degrees celsius by the year 2100. Some commentators, however, ridicule

the effects of such seemingly small temperature shifts. However, even minute changes can have serious consequences. A Dutch study has visualised that by the year 2050, 24 per cent of the world's parks and protected areas could see major vegetation changes because of warming. A three-foot rise in sea levels, which may occur by the year 2100 would put 80 per cent of the Marshall Islands under water, displace 70 million in Bangladesh, and inundate large areas in the Sunderbans.

More than eighty per cent of the world's population lives in the South but consumes less than one-third of the energy. Per capita carbon dioxide emission in the North is six times higher than in the South, with differentials in cumulative emissions being even more conspicuous. The UN Framework Convention on Climate Change obliges transfer of resources to the South, both for mitigation and adaptation to the adverse effects of change in climate. Clearly the equilibrium of the climate change debate has shifted from the monolithic determinism of the bio-physical sciences to the North-South factor stressing the significance of emission rights for the South as a valuable resource endowment for poverty alleviation.

Deforestation and Biodiversity Loss

The long-term trend is for accelerating deforestation in the tropical parts of the world. Between 1960 and 1990, a fifth of all tropical rainforest lost and Asia lost a full third of its original cover. Africa is losing its rainforest at a similar rate.

The human race exploits about 7,000 species for food but 1.4 million species have been identified and as many as 40 million may exist in nature. As the National Academy of sciences speculates in *One Earth, One Future*, "Scientists and the public worry that with deforestation and the loss of natural habitat many of these species will be gone before they are even known to exist." The loss of biodiversity means loss of species whose benefits to mankind are unknown. An estimated 75,000 plants have edible parts and many thousands of others have medicinal benefits like the rosy periwinkle of Madagascar, which is the basis of an effective Hodgkin's disease treatment or the birth control pill which has its origins in the Mexican yam. As rightly pointed out by Professor Thomas Lovejoy of the Smithsonian Institute: "Much as this century has been dominated by the physics and information revolution, the next and those to follow will be the centuries of biology. . . . To reap the benefits for a healthy and productive society, we will need biodiversity."

Biotechnology

The development of biotechnology has had a negative effect also as plants and animals are being tampered with. Scientists are actually competing to complete the mapping of the 100,000 genes in the human genome, a breakthrough that, when coupled with advances in genetic screening,

somatic gene therapy and the manipulation of human eggs, sperm and cells could lead to a 21st-century engenics movement.

Pollution

However, a major environmental concern is in the sphere of pollution contributed primarily by vehicles. Every gallon of gasoline burnt up in an auto engine sends 20 pounds of CO₂ (carbon-dioxide), containing five pounds of pure carbon into the atmosphere. The international agreement on global warming signed by 150 countries in Kyoto late in 1997 makes the effort to cut down an automobile exhaust even more urgent. Meeting the Kyoto goals will not be easy and the auto industry is in no way ready to do its part.

The most severe air pollution can now be found in most large cities of the Third World and particularly in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. The most obvious environmental consequence of conventional economic growth in the developing world will likely be even dirtier and less healthy air in cities that are often (if not always) terribly polluted. Apart from air, water pollution has become a problem in some Asian countries, severely affecting the health of the people.

Pervasive Toxins

One of the most pervasive chemical poisons is lead, estimated to have put 130 to 200 million people around the world at risk. As a whole, toxic exposure to heavy metals is probably affecting one billion people. According to Dr Christopher Williams, a scientist at London University, pollutants like lead are already affecting the intelligence of one in 10 British children and as much as 90 per cent of children in some African countries. Though no data is available on the possible number of slum or street children affected by air pollution in Calcutta, it is estimated that around 40 per cent of the child population of the city suffer from bronchial and/or respiratory diseases.

Some 63,000 chemicals are in use around the world today and as many as 1,000 synthetics enter the market every year. Many, if not most, of these chemicals have been inadequately studied and some are potent carcinogens. Among the substances likely to produce growing health risks in the 21st century are organochlorine pesticides and PCBs, chlorinated dioxins and the so-called "endocrine disrupters" which interfere with human and animal reproductive health.

The daunting challenges before us on the environmental front have to be handled with scientific skill and sincere efforts. Apart from international initiatives, the governments have to play a crucial role in tackling all forms of environmental degradation through research and innovation. Governments can also provide leadership that encourages business and industry to make the changes in the design of engines or plants or jobs that

only they can make. They can fund technological research to develop alternative energy sources and ways to reduce energy consumption or, perhaps better, provide tax credits to industry for undertaking these needed steps. But above all this, the cooperation and participation of all sections of society would be needed.

To move towards ecological sustainability, we will have to recognise humans as part of, not apart from, nature. Humans will have to develop new respect for the importance of other species and the health of ecological systems. Ecosystem management requires us to reject an utilitarian view of nature and management practices judged mainly by the criterion of economic efficiency and, instead, adopt an experimental, adaptive approach to resource management based on an exploration of ecological principles.

A new kind of democracy based on open deliberations and easy access to government and a newly motivated citizenry will be the key to making ecosystem management decisions. The most acceptable model is in community-based conservation. Collaborative community-based ecosystem management presents one means of addressing both environmental concerns for ecological sustainability and democratic concerns for justice and economic equity. In order to be fully functional, civil society organisations will have to be integrated into the governance structure, particularly the regulation and management of natural resources and land use. Citizens will have to be motivated and empowered by being given opportunities to participate in making critical environmental and social choices that govern their interests. In fact, citizens empowerment may well require fundamental restructuring of economic system of many governments, including that of India, to break the power monopolies of centralised governments.

A paradigm shift to ecosystem management that would truly embrace the goal of ecological sustainability is not impossible but will not occur without explicit societal recognition and acceptance of the political changes that may necessarily accompany it.

The new millennium should generate more awareness, more concern for preserving and protecting the planet earth as we march ahead towards progress and prosperity. Future generations may question us why we did not move faster to employ technologies that were more energy-efficient and alternative fuels that were cleaner, once they knew they were available.

DHURJATI MUKHERJEE

Book Reviews

Satendra Nandan, *Fiji: Paradise in Pieces*, The Centre for Research in New Literatures in English, Adelaide, 2000, pp. 200

Satendra Nandan's book, *Fiji: Paradise in Pieces* is a commendable effort to re-situate Gandhi in the context of violence and humiliation being inflicted on the Indian diaspora in present-day Fiji.

Mr Satendra Nandan, the Fijian poet-novelist-activist-critic has been a familiar name in the area of post-colonial studies. His works offers deep and penetrating insights into the condition of the Indo-Fijian diaspora. And his critical essays brilliantly map out those aspects of the diasporic experience which continues to remain "untouchable" (read unfashionable) in the works of the contemporary theory writers (like Homi Bhabha, Gayatri C. Spivak, Salman Rushdie, Vijay Misra et al) who tend to over-theorise such diasporic conditions as hybridity, hyphenation, exile and dispossession—primarily from the Western-metropolitan point of view using a metalanguage which tends to be an end in itself. Professor Nandan's book under review comes to me as a whiff of fresh air for many reasons. First, it is deeply concerned about a human predicament—the condition of the Indo-Fijians and the rape of democracy in the present-day Fiji—the incidents of the highjacking of a democratically elected government headed by Mahendra Chaudhary by a tin-pot-dictator, George Speight, and the trauma of violence inflicted on the Indo-Fijians in the ensuing ethnic riots. Secondly, it offers me the hitherto untold narratives of the Indian diaspora settled in Fiji, from the beginning to the present day, in a language that is interventionist (so unlike the almost surrealist-impressionist critical narratives manufactured by the Bhabha-Spivak-Corp., for example). Yet one cannot miss the profoundly moving poetry, so subtly interwoven into the texture of his narratives. Thirdly, it employs the immensely appealing autobiographical mode that does tally with the concatenation of the historical events without being rhapsodically self-reflexive! Fourthly, it is, perhaps, the very first critical enterprise of its kind to have applied an eminently Gandhian perspective and approach to textualize and analyse the condition of a victimized diasporic community; its many struggles for survival and growth, its hopes and fears, its persistent adherence to Satyagraha (truth force) and nonviolence—all have been rendered into an overarching Gandhian praxis. The constant absence/neglect of Gandhi in the contemporary diaspora discourse is, indeed, all the more shocking because

he was, no doubt, the first to have provided the discursive as well as the political strategies to the indentured labourers or *girmityas* to fight against the structures of injustice and oppression during his twenty one-year-long-stay in South Africa. Out of his hitherto published 100 volumes, some fifteen volumes record various aspects of Gandhi's massive mobilisation of the indentured labourers into the relentlessly nonviolent struggles of resistance which, if read and practised even today, may yield many important insights into the dynamics of the multi-faceted issues concerning the diaspora question.

Moreover, Gandhi was not a privileged or self-styled "exile" as much as likes of the theory writers of today, nor even an academic-turned-professional critic—a postmodern *avatar* of Don Quixote—tilting at the "imaginary homelands!" Whatever he wrote about the political and spiritual mobilisation of the Indian diaspora during his South Africa days, he translated it into action. Hence his continuing relevance to the struggling diasporic communities even today. Sadly enough, the contemporary "ivory tower" intellectuals pontificating on the diaspora condition could not, and perhaps, would not point at Gandhi as his work necessitates, without any fashionable linguistic frills, the translation of theory into praxis. It is in this Gandhian context that Satendra Nandan makes a timely but long overdue critical intervention in the writing of the diasporic experience.

The author has divided the book into thirteen chapters that may also be read as a diaspora omnibus as he, an insider, lets the reader know about the political, historical, and cultural dimensions of the Indian-Fijian diaspora without ignoring their mythical consciousness which sustains them even today as they vacillate between the two existential coordinates—memory and desire. A sort of creative randomness pervades the entire structure of his narratives—primarily because the harrowing experiences of displacement and dispossession defy causality and rationality at times.

The first prefatory essay, "Author's Notes," which is also the longest in the book, sums up the author's (con)-textual politics as he familiarises the reader with the history of the Indian-Fijian diaspora. Even since the arrival of the first Indian-Fijians in Fiji in May 1879 (almost all of them were from Uttar Pradesh in north India), more than 60,000 of them were transported to Fiji as "girmityas (pidgin, from agreement)" to work on the sugar plantations by the 1920s. Their descendants have now been living on these islands for the past 121 years" (p. 6). The author also narrates how, on 14 May 1987, Dr Timoccy Bavadra's coalition government was deposed by Col. Sitiveni Rabuka in a military coup. Dr Bavadra could hardly put the nation back on the rails when, after four months, Col. Rabuka staged another coup. Professor Nandan describes it poignantly: "First was treason, second treasury of the Judas kiss" (p. 6). He also mentions the significant contributions of leaders like Rabuka, Ratu Mara, Jairam Reddy and Mahendra Chaudhary to the nation-building as Fiji was destined to be a multicultural, multiethnic, pluralist civil society. But the election of

Mahendra Pal Chaudhary, the grandson of the *girmitya* parents, as the first Indian-Fijian Prime Minister' on 18 May 1999, marked the beginning of a new era of cooperation and pluralism in Fiji. But this seeming paradise did not last long and a nondescript George Speight, in connivance with some local goons, easily deposed the Mahendra Chaudhary government in the year 2000 taking Chaudhary and his cabinet hostage for months! George Speight now faces a trial and the Fijian High Court may reinstall the Fiji Labour Party government with a new leader—probably Tupeny Baba, a commoner Fijian professor who may also become the new prime minister! Having said this, Satendra Nandan, who had been a member of the Fijian Parliament and a minister during Dr Bavadra's regime, does not forget to remind the Fijian natives of the role played by the Indian diaspora in the making of the nation.

Professor Satendra Nandan admirably contextualizes the racial-ethnic conflict between the Indian immigrants and the native Fijians which lies at the root of Fiji's current crisis: "The tragedy of Fijians had been that the Fijians and the Indians lived in separate cultural worlds—it had begun with colonisation, migration, plantation and it continued with communal representations and institutions: different schools, places of worship, lifestyles, villages and koros; different rites, rituals and ceremonies; different languages and sense of reality. . . . The consequences of such division are always and everywhere disastrous" (p. 14). Thus the politics of segregation as used by the racist authorities kept and still continues to keep to an extent the two communities—the Indians and the Fijians—apart from each other. It is in this politico-cultural context that Satendra Nandan introduces Gandhi's South African experience as a beacon of hope for the struggling Indian-Fijians of today. He quotes (pp. 16-18) a substantial part of the chapter entitled "Balasundaram" from Gandhi's *Autobiography* only to prove how Balasundaram, a Tamil *girmitya* (indentured worker), who was rescued by Gandhi from the clutches of racist authorities in South Africa, becomes a metaphor for the Indian diaspora settled in Fiji. It is therefore not accidental that even Mahendra Chaudhary, the more-sinned-against-than-sinners-deposed prime minister of Fiji, candidly acknowledged Gandhi as one of the major influences on him: "Having risen from the ranks of a trade union leader to the highest position in an alien land, Chaudhary has always looked upon Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Nelson Mandela as his ideals. And this is again what is now egging him on and keeping him going—to have democracy restored in Fiji." Satendra Nandan exposes the designs of the usurper George Speight in a befitting manner: "George Speight, the self-styled leader of the coup and the self-appointed President and then Prime Minister, is nervously claiming indigeneity and his partners in the crime seem men of no credulity or authenticity of any kind. That he should have business connections in Australia is of increasing significance. I would not be surprised if there are some crooked businessmen behind this drama, both from outside and

within Fiji" (p. 25). The author also mentions the increasing immigration of the Indian-Fijians from the country in the wake of frequent coups and racial-ethnic-discrimination, mainly to New Zealand, Canada, California, and Australia.

It is here that Satendra Nandan wants the Indian-Fijians to learn lessons from Gandhi's strategy of nonviolent struggle—the integration of a vastly scattered Indian diaspora in South Africa after the notorious Pietermeritzburg train incident on 7 June 1893, the launching of *Indian Opinion* to disseminate the political consciousness and the diasporic point of view among the Indian as well as the South African community, the establishment of two "ashrams"—the Phoenix settlement and the Tolstoy Farm—to inculcate self-reliance, self-respect, and spiritual strength among the satyagrahis, and his leadership qualities with which he led the famous Satyagraha for almost ten years against an apartheid regime. Satendra Nandan waves lyrical as he remembers his "Bapu" in connection with the present crisis the Indian-Fijians are in.

The essay "The Indian-Fijian: A Complex Fate" (pp. 34-48) explains the so-called hyphenated, hybrid, in-between, or interstitial spaces that the Indian diaspora in Fiji occupies as a community without doling out the doleful doses of deconstructive jargon in dollops which characterizes much of the contemporary diasporic discourse. Like a *drishta* (seer), the author has a vision of Fiji, rooted again in the Gandhian worldview: "Intellectually, many of us belong to the Western tradition by our education and training. . . . We grew up within the Indian tradition, with its richness and variety. . . . If only we could create a synthesis of these two into one multicultural tradition, how much richer our society would be. . . . The experience of a multicultural society will help them to adapt to new social environments into which our people will move, because multiculturalism is becoming the predominant way of life all over the world. . . . This is imperative for self-knowledge and self-understanding" (p. 43). Another essay, "Indians and the War" (pp. 67-79), successfully explodes the myth about the non-participation of the Indian-Fijians in the Second World War in which the native Fijians fought on the side of the Empire. This myth is whipped up periodically to be used against the Indian-Fijians—to keep them out of the military.

The author analyzes the various issues related to the diasporic experiences in two important essays, namely "The Politics of Dispossession and Exile" (pp. 89-114) and "Writing as Resistance" (pp. 115-127). He gives the Indian notion of "exile" as a central metaphor of self-realisation: "The Indian epics, the Mahabharata and the Ramayana, both have exile as their protean metaphors, as if dispossession or banishment were the necessary condition for our discovery both of ourselves and this dust-laden world in which we all are so infinitely tangled" (p. 89).

Here again the Gandhi connection is too important to be ignored. First, Gandhi always regarded Tulsi's *Ramacharitmanas* and the *Gita* as his sources

of perennial inspiration. Secondly, it was with the help of Gandhi's close journalist friend, Banarasidas Chaturvedi, that the first narratives of the *girmit* experience in Fiji could be written.

There are also autobiographical essays in the book, as, for example, "The Wound and the Vow," "Not So Far Away, Not So Long Ago," and "The Last Rites" in which the personal and the political are inextricably intertwined. They are, in a true Gandhian sense, his various experiments with truth. In the end, the author offers an allegorical narrative, "Mangoes," (pp. 161-79) which narrates the history of the migration of the Indian indentured workers, many of them did land in Fiji and their stories of survival in "*pardes* (foreign lands)."

What, however, makes this book different from scores of other circulating titles on the diaspora question is its quest for truth in the Gandhian manner, its sheer poetic brilliance, its mythical consciousness, its biblical style, and its bias for Dharma in the context of the plight of the Indian diaspora in Fiji. It has to be said that the writer does not make a fetish of Gandhi. He deserves credit for producing a narrative that rediscovers the value and urgency of the Gandhian Satyagraha for the continuing struggle for freedom and democracy in the present-day Fiji.

Sudhir Kumar

Sheshrao Chavan, *Gandhi and Ambedkar: Saviours of Untouchables*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Bombay, Authors Press, Delhi, 2001, pp. xv+272

The book is unique. In his Foreword, Justice C.S. Dharmadhikari has observed that the author, while describing and analysing facts and circumstances, has not taken any side or partisan attitude. He is seeking truth so that a true picture emerges to understand Gandhi and Ambedkar in a correct and right perspective. The material of the book has been arranged in nine chapters. The first chapter deals with the "Saviours of Untouchables." In this chapter the sterling qualities of character of both the leaders have been described. Both had hearts softer than rose petal. Their hearts bled because of the suffering of people and especially of untouchables. Their paths were different to deliver the untouchables from the slavery of centuries. Gandhi represented the masses of India, while Dr Ambedkar the depressed classes. Both of them were able to lead their movements without lowering any of their standards even by a hair's breadth. Both of them had shunned hero worship. They wanted their followers to fight against injustice and inequality prevalent in the society.

The second chapter is devoted to the "Round Table Conference." The first Round Table Conference (12 November 1930), presided over by Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald, has been described by the author as staging

the play of Hamlet without the King of Denmark. The British government soon realised the futility of the conference in the absence of representative/s from the Congress. Gandhi was sent as a representative of the Congress. He had registered India's claim for complete independence at the very outset of the Conference. Gandhi stated that the Congress was "national" and not merely a party organisation. It represented all the communal minorities and also the Indian States. In support of his claim, he pointed out that there were four Muslims among the fifteen members of the Working Committee and thousands of Muslims in the rank and file. He wanted honourable and equal partnership between the British and India, held not by force but by the silken cord of love. But unfortunately, in the Conference there was the unending discussion on the communal problem. Gandhi had admitted to the Prime Minister that there was no agreed solution to the communal problem. The failure was inherent in the very composition of the Indian delegation which mostly had not elected representatives but nominees of the government. Gandhi had to forcefully say that the claim advanced on behalf of untouchables was the unkindest out of all. It would mean the perpetual bar sinister. "I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India." Gandhi was not in favour of separate electorates and separate reservation for the eradication of untouchability. Harold Laski observed at the Conference about Gandhi thus: "Through Gandhi the Indian Ryot feels himself exalted, he embodies for them their own impulses to self-affirmation." However, Dr Ambedkar held Gandhi responsible for the failure of the Round Table Conference. The basic reasons attributed were: (i) the lack of harmony among Indian delegates, and (ii) the obstinate reluctance of the conservatives to part with real power to India. The other reason advanced by some was lack of tactics on the part of Gandhi as a saint had no place in a meeting of die-hard politicians.

The third chapter makes a critical and sympathetic evaluation of the "Epic Fast and Poona Pact." The failure of the Round Table Conference gave an excuse to the Prime Minister to announce his Communal Award. In substance, it tried to fractionalise the entire electorate by giving separate recognition to the number of minorities including the depressed classes and by assigning separate electorate to them. By implication it meant that Indian unity was a myth. Gandhi's reaction was to resort to a fast unto death against separate electorates for the depressed classes. Dr Ambedkar described this fast as a political stunt and not a moral fight. The other depressed class leaders were incensed and critical of Dr Ambedkar. They wanted to ignore his views as he did not represent all the depressed classes. Gandhi explained that the fast had been taken as a part of penance and atonement for the atrocities committed by the Hindus on the untouchables. It also aimed to raise Hindu conscience into right religious action. Rabindranath Tagore approved of the fast by saying: "It is worth sacrificing precious life for the sake of India's unity and her social integrity."

Dr Ambedkar was eager to save the life of Mahatma. After meeting Gandhi in the Yeravda Jail, he stated: There was so much common between him and me and I think, in the Poona negotiations, a large part of the credit goes to Mahatma Gandhi. I was astounded to see that the man who held such a divergent view from mine at the time came to my rescue rather than to the rescue of the other side." Dr Ambedkar declared: "I had to make choice between two difficult alternatives. There was the life of the 'greatest' man in India to be saved. There was also before me the problem to try and safeguard the interests of the community. I am happy to be able to say that it has become possible through the cooperation of all of us to find the solution so as to save the life of the Mahatma and at the same time consistence with such protection as is necessary for the interest of the depressed classes in the future." The Poona Pact was signed on 24 September 1932, according to which there would be seats reserved for the depressed classes out of the general seats.

The fourth chapter is on the Harijan Sevak Sangh whose main objective was to touch the "savarna" heart and change it. Gandhi said: "Every Harijan Sevak must be fired with a passion to purify Hinduism and must be ready to lay down his life in the attempt." Dr Ambedkar felt that the Harijan Sevak Sangh was a charitable organisation only in name. Its real aim was to ensure that the untouchables become the followers of the Hindus and the Congress. It wanted to scotch any movement aimed at freeing the untouchables from social, religious, and economic domination of the Hindus. The Sangh is largely directed by caste Hindus. The change of heart had not taken place as was evident from the fact that the Sangh had sunk separate wells rather than allowed them to draw the water from common wells. The Sangh should do sufficient work all over India to secure civil rights for the depressed classes. The Sangh had adopted peaceful methods of change and not direct action as a method to abolish untouchability from the Hindu fold. Gandhi would demand for a Harijan Welfare Fund, a minimum of five rupees for giving an autograph.

Chapter five, on temples, is the same story as that in the fourth. Gandhi took a nation-wide tour in 1933 to promote the Harijan cause. He penetrated into the remotest corner of India covering almost 12,500 miles. He called on caste Hindus to purge themselves of the prejudice against the Harijans. At the same time, he urged the Harijans to shake off the vices which came in their way for the absorption into the Hindu fold. He opined: "Temple entry is the one spiritual act that would constitute the message of freedom to the untouchables and assure them that they are not outcasts. It is the bounden duty of every cast Hindu to secure that opening for Harijans." This act was not for the material benefit of Harijans but for the spiritual benefit of the Savarna Hindus.

Chapters 7 and 8 have critically examined Hinduism and the word "Harijan." Gandhi was prepared to renounce Hinduism if it continued to believe in untouchability. He did not find any support for the practice of

untouchability either in scriptures or in practices of Hindu scriptures. The word "Harijan" was used to give untouchables dignity and status. This was also aimed to change the mindset of Hindus in general and orthodox Hindus in particular.

The feud between Gandhi and Ambedkar has been blown out of proportions. This has been done without properly understanding both the leaders. The relationship between the two could be described as that of "love and hate." The author has beautifully summed up: "Gandhi loved and respected the feelings of Ambedkar, whereas Ambedkar missed no opportunity to criticise and condemn Gandhi."

The book will certainly remove many cobwebs in the minds of people about differences between Gandhi and Ambedkar on the question of eradication of untouchability from India in general and in Hindu society in particular. On the whole, the book would prove of immense use to all those who are interested in the problem of untouchability.

K.D. Gangrade

Laxman Madho Bhole, ed., *Essays on Gandhian Socio-Economic Thought*, Shipra Publications, Delhi, 2000, pp. 251

The twentieth century witnessed the dawn of the phenomenon of Gandhi and a burgeoning literature on Gandhian ideas, thought, perspectives, paths (marg) and models and programmes of reconstruction of human society. The new-millennium social scientists, statesmen, researchers, planners and policymakers continue to ask the same question today which their seniors raised in the previous millennium: Is Gandhi relevant today?

The book under review purports to remove the misinterpretations, misunderstandings, and misrepresentations surrounding Gandhi. The purpose would have been better served if the author had taken pains to provide a holistic and integrated framework of Gandhian thoughts, ideas and ideals, and their forward and backward linkages.

But Bhole has obviously preferred convenience to hard exercise in the arrangement and ordering of the eighteen chapters of his book. He seeks the "indulgence" of the readers for repetition of certain ideas and arguments in the book, for the lack of a perfect scheme of sequencing of the chapters, and for the failure to place them in a chronological order. He is candid enough to admit that the book is a collection of his research papers published in various journals like *Gandhi Marg*, *Khadi Gramodyog*, *Bhavan's Journal*, *Indian Journal of Social Sciences*, and *IASSI Quarterly* during the last twenty years. He has gathered all of them, revised and updated some, and has added an introduction to shape them into a book. In this process, he has offered a critique of the Western and Indian models of development and of

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the ongoing liberalisation, marketisation, and globalization process and labels. It is claimed to be a Gandhian critique which it is not! Only six chapters, out of a total of eighteen, deal with the Gandhian stuff. Despite the fact that Vinoba was a believer and follower of Gandhi, the inclusion of a full chapter on "Vinoba's Vision of an Alternative Social Order" does not foot the bill. Rather, it is out of place. Nevertheless Bhole's treatment of the issues pertaining to Gandhian alternative to Western socialism, social and racial equality, Swadeshi, and the Gandhian model of nonviolent social order is indeed competent.

The book also contains some controversial and questionable statements. To give an illustration, in the chapter on rethinking on secularism through Gandhian perspective, the author argues "for the abandonment of the policy of secularism in favour of the revival, reaffirmation, and reinstatement of the religious world-view in the true sense of that term at the individual, state, and societal levels." He also observes that "seularism is not a lofty ideal, that it is an anti-religious philosophy, and that it is incapable of securing integration, harmony, peace, and happiness at the individual, social, national, and international levels" (p. 220). The above statements betray the Hindu communal outlook and a mindset of the author and he falsely implicates and takes shelter behind Gandhi. This perception of the author has done a great disservice to Gandhi who laid down his life for communal harmony and unity among the Hindus and Muslims. Instead of removing the misinterpretation, misunderstanding and misrepresentation about Gandhi—"one of the objectives of the book," the author stands guilty of misrepresenting and misunderstanding the secular ideas and actions of Mahatma Gandhi. The communal beast in the author has got the upper hand of him and has eroded his intellectual honesty.

Most readers of the book like me would find it hard to accept the conclusion that Bhole arrives at regarding India's planned development. He writes (after listing the success stories about India's performance on the developmental front) thus: "The outcome of development in India can be said to have been disastrous" (p. 12). Or, "India is in the throes of unprecedented crisis—economic, social, political, educational, environmental, ecological, ethical, moral, and spiritual." He goes on to say that "within a short span of 45 years the Western model of development had led India to the brink of a precipice" (p. 27). The truth is that the Indian development experience has been spectacular in some respects, moderate in others, and below average in some other respects. It is not a runaway success; but it is not disastrous.

In his obsession with the Gandhian alternative, the author conveniently ignores the fundamental differences between State and market and talks about the "unity" between the two. An economist that Bhole is, he does not know that during the process of its evolution, the State has taken many different forms—from the city-state, slave state, feudal state, to *laissez faire*

(police) state, liberal democratic state, welfare state, capitalist state, socialist state, communist state, and so on.

The Gandhian paradigm of reconstruction of society was based on the core ideas of decentralised, people's participation based rural development, self-governing village republics, with dynamic and vibrant panchayats, schools and cooperatives promoting trusteeship and fulfilment of basic needs of life through self-reliance, self-help, and self-sufficiency, producing for the masses (and not mass production) with appropriate technology and rural industrialization. The Gandhian blueprint encompassed the minimal state, rural markets and a flourishing civil society to build a classless, casteless, and just society.

That the book is based on a clear understanding of these perceptions and perspectives of Gandhi draws upon both primary and secondary source materials and is written in an easy and simple language goes in its favour as an important and useful reading for students, researchers, planners, and policymakers.

Noorjahan Bava

Sheshrao Chavan, *The Makers of Indian Constitution: Myth and Reality*, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Mumbai, 2000, pp. xi+254

In the popular mind Bharat Ratna Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar and the Constitution of India are synonymous. If Mahatma Gandhi is hailed as the Father of the Nation, it is fashionable to hail Dr Ambedkar as the Father of the Indian Constitution. To believe otherwise would be considered sacrilegious and the non-believer may even stand in danger of being beaten up. Dr Ambedkar has become an icon.

At the risk of being misunderstood, Mr Sheshrao Chavan who is himself a distinguished scholar has written about the real makers of the Indian Constitution, without in any way playing down Dr Ambedkar's role. It should be of great contemporaneous interest. It is noteworthy that Dr Ambedkar came into the Constituent Assembly with no greater aspiration than to safeguard the interest of the Scheduled Castes. At that time he had not the remotest idea that he might be called upon to undertake a very important task. To start with Dr Ambedkar had ceased to be a member of the Constituent Assembly as a result of the partition of Bengal. But he was brought back to it—thanks to the efforts of Dr Rajendra Prasad and, of all people, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Once he was back in the Assembly, he wanted to be included in the Nehru Cabinet. Indrani Devi, wife of the other distinguished Scheduled Caste leader Jagjivan Ram has recorded in her memories *Dekhi, Suni Baten* that "Ambedkar had started coming to our house" to request Jagjivan Ram to put in a word to Gandhi to have him

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included in the Union Cabinet. Jagjivan Ram was in two states of mind: Ambedkar had always opposed Gandhi and the Congress. How could he now ask Gandhi to favour Ambedkar? But it would seem that he did. According to Rajmohan, Nehru was opposed to taking Dr Ambedkar in but Gandhi reportedly told Jawaharlal that freedom had come to India and not to Nehru and that he had better utilise Dr Ambedkar's talent and capacity for building modern India. (Dr Ambedkar, however, is on record as saying that he owed nothing to the Mahatma—but that is another story). Actually it was Gandhi who, on hearing that the Congress Party was thinking of inviting Ivor Jennings to help prepare the Constitution suggested that the task should be given to Dr Ambedkar. But was it all his own work? It was not. According to Dr K.M. Munshi himself a lawyer, "there was always the encyclopaedic knowledge of Sir B.N. Rau at the service of the Assembly." Chavan quotes L. Krishnaswami Bharati, a member of the Constituent Assembly as saying: "No congratulations are due to Ambedkar for the provisions in the draft for the simple reason they are not his." Dr Ambedkar himself admitted as such when he once said (*Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar: Writings & Speeches*) that the credit that is given to him did not really belong to him. As he put it: "It belongs partly to Sir B.N. Rau, the Constitutional Adviser of the Constituent Assembly who prepared a rough draft . . . for the Consideration of the Drafting Committee." The Drafting Committee sat for 141 days and really went into great trouble to do a good job. In his speeches Dr Ambedkar was further to say: "Much greater share of the credit must go to Mr S.N. Mukherjee, the Chief Draftsman of the Constitution. His ability to put the most intricate proposal in the simplest and clearest legal form can rarely be equalled, nor his capacity for hard work. Without his help, this Assembly would have taken many more years to finalize the Constitution." Furthermore, Dr Ambedkar was to give credit to the Assembly as well by saying: "It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge as to the fate of each Article and each amendment."

As Law Minister it fell to Dr Ambedkar's task to pilot the draft Constitution but he was never happy with the final result. Actually when he was charged with seeking to push the Constitution through the Assembly despite defects Dr Ambedkar said: "Sir, my friends tell me that I have made Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it. I do not want it. It does not suit anybody." Very strong words, these. Dr Ambedkar had been criticised. One Assembly member, Ramnarayan Singh of Bihar mocked the Constitution saying that "in future people would say it was framed not in Delhi but at London." T. Prakasam, the Andhra leader noted sarcastically: "It is a great document and Dr Ambedkar is a great lawyer, a very able man. He has shown by the work he has done here how he would be competent to be the King's Counsel of Great Britain . . . but this is not a Constitution which we, the

people of this country, wanted." So it suited Dr Ambedkar to disown it when it suited him. Speaking in Parliament on 2 September 1953 on the Andhra State Bill he was to say: "People always keep on saying to me: Oh, you are the maker of the Constitution. My answer is, I was a hack. What I was asked to do, I did much against my will."

But let it be said right here that this is not a book meant to debunk Dr Ambedkar. The aim is to present a picture of the Constitution in the making and all the attendant problems that the Drafting Committee had to face. The value of this book is enhanced by a Preface by Dr L.M. Singhvi, the distinguished lawyer according to whom "the framing of every Constitution in the world has its own myth and reality and the Constitution of India is no exception" and a brilliant Foreword by H.R. Khanna, former Judge of the Supreme Court whose assertion that "a Constitution states, or ought to state, not the rules of the passing hour, but the principles for an expanding future" few would dare to challenge.

Sheshrao Chavan's work should be read in conjunction with Granville Austin's classic work: *The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation* in which the author has noted that "no founding document can contain solutions to every situation and that leaders in the future should find within the Constitution's principles their own way out of difficulties that might confront them." And no wiser words were said. In any event as Muhammad Sa'adulla, another Constituent Assembly member, was to say: "The Drafting Committee was not a free agency. We were handicapped from the very start. We were only asked to dress the baby and the baby was nothing but the *Objectives Resolution*. And that is the Reality."

M.V. Kamat

N. Narayanasamy, M.P. Borain, and M.A. Jeyaraju, *Corruption at the Grassroots: The Shades and Shadows*, Concept Publishing Co., New Delhi, 2000, pp. 198

The issue of corruption has been an all-pervasive phenomenon in almost all societies in recent times. It has expanded its tentacles in all walks of public life and has dug deep into the soils of most developing societies. In India it has acquired frightening proportions. It has not only spread to every part of governmental machinery but has also made a very rapid growth even in the non-governmental institutions and among political activists and functionaries at all levels. In a way it has become institutionalized. The prevalence of a widespread public cynicism towards it, people's acceptance of corruption as a fact of life, and the feeling that those indicted of corruption hardly get punished have led to a situation where even the most determined efforts to fight the venality have failed miserably.

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Although the issue of corruption at high levels has drawn a good deal of attention by media and political and administrative analysts, corruption at the micro level, especially in the process of people availing the benefits of welfare and developmental schemes in the vast expenses of the urban and rural areas of the country have hardly been the subject of study by scholars except sporadic reporting by the media and the press. The present book is the outcome of a two-day national workshop on "Corruption at the Grassroot Level" sponsored in December 1998 by the World Bank, New Delhi, and the Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram, Tamil Nadu. The various papers included in this compendium dwell upon the roots of corruption, its causes and its consequences on administration, economy, political system and government, morale of the public, the effectiveness of the existing policies and programmes designed to control corruption and the strategies planned to eliminate corruption at the grassroots.

Although most of the papers included herein are more impressionistic in nature rather than based on any systematic or empirical or analytical research, and in many papers the points of discussions tend to be repetitive (which perhaps could not be avoided in a volume of this nature), the redeeming feature of the book is that these do indicate a variety of practices and various dimensions of corruption, particularly prevailing at the grassroots level in the local urban and rural governmental institutions in India. A few of the conceptual and theoretical papers have also attempted to discuss sociological, economic, political, and moral explanations of the causes and consequences of corruption, but the arguments are largely the same as are applicable to the phenomenon of corruption at a macro level.

The workshop has come out with some specific recommendations to combat the evil of corruption in local-level institutions, especially in the public welfare schemes, interspersed with recommendations to combat corruption at the macro level. Apart from some of the oft-advocated procedural reforms suggested at various levels of decision-making, the participants at the workshop seem to have placed a good deal of reliance on the role of NGOs and Action Groups and the women's organizations to fight the evil of corruption through an organized movement. But this overconfidence in the efficacy of such non-state actors seems to be somewhat misplaced as many of such organizations are themselves under cloud facing derecognition due to the misutilisation of their resources and funds. A balanced multi-pronged strategy steered by some well-meaning public and corporate leaders and individuals of high integrity, and a concerted drive backed by public awareness needs to be evolved to fight this menace on a continuing basis.

The book, however, is timely, well-produced and serves very well its purpose to highlight the peculiar features of the evil of corruption at the grassroot level and the way this could possibly be tackled.

R.B. Jain

Govindan Parayil, ed., *Kerala: The Development Experience—Reflections on Sustainability and Replicability*, Zed Books, London, 2000, pp. x+274

The Kerala model of development has been gaining an increasing salience in development discourse for quite sometime, more so contemporaneously in the newly arisen formative context of globalization. Needless to say that Kerala proffered a new tapestry of development through public action which transfigured a highly feudal and hierarchically fractured society into a social-democratic state. By enhancing critical capabilities and ensuring adequate entitlements, it not only broke the patterns of poverty but also avoided the stalemated conflicts of social forces by integrating the deprived and recalcitrant social peripheries with the mainstream society.

It is true that Kerala did not develop into an industrial behemoth or a vibrant economic power as the pre-1997 tiger economies. But it is equally true that it has pecked into shape an ethical state—at least in a minimal sense—which valourized and still valourizes the collective good of its citizenry over the acquisitive instinct of the few. The Kerala model has achieved economic gains for its citizens but without high economic growth in per capita GDP and corresponding increase throughout.

However, in recent times many critical questions are raised about this development experience pertaining to both the conditions of excluded communities and the durability of the model itself. This realization on the part of many intellectuals forced them to conclude that the survival of the model depends on the “consciousness and struggle of the masses” and further that the organized Left needs to renew its agenda so as to comprehend the changed context. The response of the Left to this is the people’s planning programme, a vigorous experimentation in participatory democracy.

The book under review comes against the background of this democratic surge. It raises several seminal issues about the replicability and sustainability of the model and also explores its potential for providing a new praxis of socio-economic transformation, different from the development paradigms of both the communist and capitalist vintages, perhaps *a la* Gandhi and Marx combined. A bunch of twelve scholars who have established their stamp in their respective areas of enquiry discusses these issues.

The book begins with a poser from the editor himself as to whether Kerala’s development experience is a “model.” The question comes against the background of the neo-classical economists considering Kerala’s experience as an enigma, a riddle, as if to mean that it is not a normal growth. To them social development and improvement in material conditions of living come about only under conditions of economic growth which in turn depends on free trade and linkage with globalized financial systems.

Govindan Parayil rejects the convergence principle encoded in this type of argument and points out that modernization can be pursued in different ways. The experience of Kerala itself is a case in point. The state could achieve its economic targets because it defied the *status quo* and showed the courage of conviction to charter a new path of development and modernization on its own terms, the author maintains.

Viewed in the above perspective, Kerala is not an enigma, but a model that has emerged from within the Third World, with a great potential for replication. V.K. Ramachandran puts this idea in a more nuanced manner in his article "Kerala's Development Achievements and their Replicability." He believes that at the present level of income, public action can ensure a similar degree of social development for the people of the country as a whole provided certain social transformation—mass literacy, change in agrarian relations and caste and gender equality—take place. However, for this to happen the ascendancy of the Left in Indian politics is necessary, he argues.

As already pointed out, many writers have started raising serious doubts about the sustainability of the model, both from the economic and from the ecological perspectives. However, Richard W. Franke and Barbara H. Chasin, Rene Veron, and William M. Alexander in their articles, discount this fear.

Franke and Chasin in their article "Is the Kerala Model Sustainable: Lessons from the Past, Prospects for the Future," after explaining their notion of sustainability and discussing the varied aspects of the model, point out how it is relevant as an alternative to *growth—only* development strategies and its viability in economic terms. To the sceptics their advice is to realise the possibilities of People's Plan Campaign in this regard. According to them, it offers democracy in place of domination, empowerment in place of submission, environment and community in place of profit, and action in place of passivity.

Rene Veron, on the other hand, looks at sustainability of the model from an ecological perspective. Drawing from the recommendations of the Rio de Janeiro Conference (1992), it is argued that sustainable environment management can occur only where active local-level support and participation exist. Assessing the contemporary Kerala situation in this regard, he maintains that as of now the normative concept of sustainable development has not become a general cultural value among the Malayalam-speaking people. However, the People's Plan Programme—"new Kerala model" according to him—has a limited potential in tiding over this as it promises to integrate sustainable development goals more successfully into policymaking and to go beyond mere state regulations to include community-based strategies for environment protection, a sort of a collaboration between the state, NGOs, and social/civil society movements. At the same time, he cautions against state failure to implement complementary regulatory and price instruments for environment

protection, failure to consider the social reality of differential access to natural resources, and conflicting individual and group interests and private ownership of environmental resources.

Though Alexander too discusses the sustainability problematic ("Normal Kerala Within Abnormal India: Reflections on Gender and Sustainability"), he also throws light on how the general equity family structure of Kerala was integral to the success of the model, besides the convergence of several important religious, economic, and political movements in transforming the state from a tyranny of caste into an egalitarian democracy. He ends with a positive note on its sustainability due to low consumption of resources and zero population growth.

The point of discussion for Wesley Shrum and Sundar Ramanathaiyer in their article "The Knowledge, Democratization, and Sustainability: The Kerala Model of Scientific Capacity Building" is the building of scientific capacity in less-developed states and analysing the utility of Kerala's experience in this regard and its replicability elsewhere in India. Capacity building is defined as "a process of increasing the ability of social entities to participate in the generation and development of scientific and technological knowledge through research formations" (p. 158). After analysing Kerala's track record in this respect, the authors argue that it is a product of historical and political circumstances that characterize a remarkable trajectory of development which is exemplary in many respects.

The book also contains two comparisons, one from K.P. Kannan in his "Poverty Alleviation as Advancing Basic Human Capabilities: Kerala's Achievement Compared," and the other from Rex Casinader in his "The Kerala Model: Some Comparison with the Sri Lankan Experience." Kannan's is a comparison of Kerala's experience in poverty alleviation with Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, China, and India. The author identifies the centrality of education in the process and lays stress on the importance of the socio-political context in it. While in the Asian context the whole achievement is the direct result of the intervention of a *strong state*, in Kerala poverty alleviation took place in a democratic framework with least limitations on the freedom of political choice or public action on the part of the population and that too along with narrowing spatial and gender differential. By implication this means that the potential for public action in social development differed vastly in the two contexts.

Rex Casinader makes a modest comparison of the Kerala model with the Sri Lankan experience and underscores the centrality of radical forces in mainstream politics and governance in both societies—CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front in Kerala and the Centre—Left coalition led by the Centrist Sri Lanka Freedom Party in Lanka—as instrumental in their respective development models. However, as their religious experience including reformatory tradition differed, ethnic strife became rampant in Sri Lanka whereas the same is conspicuous by its absence in Kerala. The author also shows in passing how the World Bank-IMF-sponsored

structural adjustment has been playing havoc in Sri Lanka for the last two decades.

From replicability, sustainability, and comparison the book proceeds to certain specifics of the model as, for instance, the "outlier" communities, the role of trade unions, the new popular politics of development and, finally, ends with a poser as to the contemporary relevance of the model.

It is John Kurien who in its article "The Kerala Model: Its Central Tendency and the Outlier" concerns himself with the first problematic, the outlier communities (marine fisherfolk) who have been left out of the domain of public action and consequently has a poor quality of life. This is strange, given the fact that the quality of life of people similarly situated, in certain cases even worst off (Dalits for instance), are comparatively better than these people. Lack of collective awareness of their deprivations and consciousness of the material basis of their socio-economic exploitation coupled with the role of religion as well as their position in Kerala society at large are responsible for this sorry state of affairs. On the strength of this observation, Kurien argues that state-led public action alone is inadequate in improving the quality of life of the weaker sections. Genuine people's participation in the form of collaborative and/or adversarial collective action should supplement public intervention, no matter which comes first—facilities or collective action.

Patrick Heller's article, "Social Capital and the Developmental State: Industrial Workers in Kerala" shows how the repeated cycles of engagement between a programmatic labour movement (under the leadership of Communist parties, CPM in particular) and a democratic state has created a unique and durable developmental state. The originized militancy of lower class groups eroded traditional structures of domination clearing the path for state penetration. The resulting synergy underwrote the politically and administratively daunting tasks of implementing structure reforms and building an extensive network of welfare services in an impoverished society.

However, beyond a point when it began to precipitate a crisis of accumulation—capital flight, disruption of production due to labour agitations and resultant stagnation in the economy—threatening many an achievement, labour itself came forward for a sort of class compromise significantly curtailing its militancy in an explicit effort to create more favourable conditions of investment and growth. An activist and embedded state has also facilitated this process, both through direct mediations and by providing the institutional backdrop against which capital-labour conflicts can be negotiated. Heller contends that though at this juncture, it could not be argued with certitude that this would guarantee the future economic growth of Kerala, it remains that this has directly enhanced the state capacity to manage contradictions of democratic capitalist development effectively.

Kerala's new popular politics of development constitutes the subject-matter of Olle Tornquist's piece on "The New Popular Politics of Development: Kerala's Experience." He starts by addressing some of the crucial issues India faces today—the need for greater democracy and popular participation, to combine economic growth and socio-economic equalization and to counter antiquated boss-rule and to place new forms of mobilizing on the agenda, without undermining earlier achievements—and searches for possible solutions. He, however, rejects the contemporary notion that the problems of the Third World can be cured with more civil society and less but "better" politics. The author of this article finally ends up by stating that the new development efforts of Kerala offer the solution to many of these ills the country faces.

The book ends with a novel theme—the need for developing a Fourth World model of development, a participative and decentralized new people's democracy, a tentative concept of a new social contract. The writer, M.P. Parameswaran, uses the concept in the sense of an extension of the First, Second, and Third Worlds based on the notion of the failures of the former two worlds and the success of a limited number of Third World states, especially that of Kerala. Here Parameswaran has in mind a bottom-up democratic concept in which each citizen is concerned about the well-being of the whole and therefore willingly participates in the state and community-building process. Concomitant to this, polity and economy have to undergo a drastic change. Politically citizens and small groups—neighbourhood and village assemblies—should become sovereign; only at that level does face-to-face democracy become possible; and other levels should be subservient to this. Economically, the Fourth World will have no gigantic enterprises based on violent technologies.

The impression one gathers after reading the book is that there is enough scope for Third World countries to be optimistic about their future provided they have faith in public action. The new economic fundamentalism of the West could be successfully challenged only if the economy and the market are laced with social and political institutions which guarantee the moral and ethical quality of people's lives. This, if the greatest lesson which the Kerala model and the central argument in the book develops. This is to put across in the most forcible manner, and also in a lucid and readable style which is very rare nowadays with books on development discourse.

It, however, does not mean that the book is flawless. One may find it difficult to concede some of the arguments developed in it—as, for instance, Patrick Hellers' statements that competition between public and private delivery services in health and education in Kerala has increased the overall efficiency (p. 67) and further that pressure from below and a highly developed culture of civic participation have increased the accountability of the local officials (p. 68). Certain other arguments are platonic—as, for example, the Fourth World model of Parameswaran; and perhaps also the

wish that Govindan Parayil would have used his prerogative as editor of the volume to trim the description of the basic tenets of the Kerala model which comes repeating in many places. However, these are only small specks when compared to the amount of scholarship the work transmits.

J. Prabhash

M.V. Gandhimohan, *Mahatma Gandhi and the Baha'is: Striving towards a Nonviolent Civilization*, Baha'is Publishing Trust, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 212

The author believes that there are many teachings of Gandhi which are similar to those of the Baha'is Faith. In the present volume he makes a critical analysis and an effort to compare their religious, ethical, and social-economic teachings. He trusts and hopes that his contribution will not only bring together members of the Baha'is and Gandhians but will also facilitate fruitful dialogue and cooperation to usher in a new world order of peace and harmony.

The author has profoundly and clearly brought out his scholarly background of statistical physics to understand macroscopic phenomena and microscopic components in comparing both Gandhi's and Baha'is teachings. He has remarkably succeeded in demonstrating that both Gandhi and the Baha'is direct to a path of deeply spiritual collective future for our planet.

No nation-state can be said to be fully sovereign today. Indeed, nations today are more interdependent than dependent. Completely new economic processes have emerged, and sometimes frustrated attempts have been made to sustain sustainable growth. The interconnectivity and complexity of the world are increasing by the day, driven in part by breath-taking scientific and technological advances and their effects on other facts of human civilization. The radical transformation in human life has begun to affect the entire planet.

The ideologies of the past are struggling to stay relevant: nationalism, ethnocentrism, racism, atheism, consumerism, materialism, religious fundamentalism, partisan politics, sexism and radical feminism, communism, and, supremacist theories, are one and all being questioned.

In this context, the present book is highly relevant as the ideals of Gandhi and the Baha'is Faith continue to claim relevance for people's thinking. The author humbly admits that it is extremely difficult to compress Gandhi's writings which are spread over 100 volumes and those of Baha'is, also 100. He has brought out striking similarities between the world-view of Gandhi and that of the Baha'is.

Comparisons are generally hazardous. But it is not altogether inconceivable to compare Gandhian and Baha'is ideals. It may be inappropriate to compare apples and oranges. And yet such comparisons need not be fruitless as the commonality between both apples and oranges is sweetness.

The Baha'is Faith was born in Baghdad in 1863. The founder of the Faith Baha'u'llah's teachings proclaim oneness of God, oneness of humankind, and oneness of religions. A fundamental obligation of human beings is to acquire knowledge with their own eyes and not through the eyes of others. A major cause of conflict in the world today is the fact that many people blindly and uncritically subscribe to various traditions, movements, and opinions. Religion and science are the two wings upon which man's intelligence can soar into heights. . . . It is not possible to fly with one wing alone. We have forgotten that even economic problems are essentially spiritual in origin. Baha'is Faith calls for the elimination of the inordinate disparity between the rich and the poor.

Both to Gandhi and to many others, Baha'is' Faith is the quest for truth. It is more than an end in itself. Gandhi had written: "If we had attained the full vision of Truth, we would no longer be mere seekers, but would have become one with God, for Truth is God." The idea that the search for truth is a tool for spiritual enlightenment can also be found in the Baha'is writings. Baha'is believe it is an individual's sacred duty to seek out truth. Unfortunately, people have not understood the real meaning of religion. It comes from a latin word meaning "to rejoin or re-unite." But sadly enough, religion has been used as an instrument of division, even war. Gandhi and the Baha'is Faith both uphold the oneness of God and the essential oneness of all religions.

Neither Gandhi nor the Baha'is underestimate the power of prayer. Prayer presupposes faith. No prayer goes in vain. "More things are wrought by prayer than this world dreams of," said Lord Alfred Tennyson.

A civilization that is not based on nonviolence will ipso facto generate violence—hence pain, suffering, etc. It is, therefore, morally imperative that we collectively strive to reconstruct society along nonviolent principles. Gandhi said: "Nonviolence is the law of our species as violence is the law of the brute . . . the man who offers his neck to the enemy for execution, but refuses to his will, shows courage of far higher type." A similar concept of nonviolence is also emphasized in the Baha'is Faith.

No doubt, the earth is but one country, and mankind its citizens. The full implications of this spiritual truth have not been realised. Both Gandhi and Baha'is believe that unity can be achieved through the preservation—nay, cultivation—of diversity. The Baha'is have offered to the world—as a model for study—a new approach for achieving unity in diversity. By now, their worldwide number has increased substantially. The cardinal principles that unify can be achieved only through diversity is a cornerstone of Baha'is Faith. This was also the fundamental principle of Gandhi. Both

believe in gender equality and not to neglect and deprive girls of nutritive food and education. They should be given all opportunities to participate in politics and governance of society. Both agree that worship of God through service of humanity is the ultimate goal of work. They also felt that economy must be humanised to eliminate exploitation and protect environment from pollution.

However, the differences between the two cannot be ignored. While Gandhi's principles are truth and nonviolence, that of the Baha'is is unity. The Baha'is believe that it is more important to be united than to be correct. To Gandhi Truth is higher than unity, while to Baha'is unity is more important than truth. Gandhi believed that it is correct and moral to disobey an unjust government so long as it is done nonviolently, while Baha'is believe that the government should be obeyed always except where such obedience would be directly against Baha'is ethics and laws.

Gandhi believed there is no need to "convert" because all religions mirror truth. According to the Baha'is Faith, however, conversion is a necessity and not proselytization. For Gandhi, sexual pleasure is a sin. In contrast, Baha'is believes that it is healthy to enjoy the pleasure of married life. Gandhi and the Baha'is differ in their interpretation of sacred scripture related to reincarnation, rebirth, heaven, and hell.

Both conclude that people who focus their minds on selfless service to humanity inevitably experience the boundless, unconditional happiness that characterizes self-transcendence.

The book is a timely warning to non-value-based politics. Bereft of any ideology or principle for political programme, political parties indulge in tactical opportunism. This trend must be arrested to save the planet from extinction. The author's unrelenting clarity is what sets him apart in handling a complicated subject. It is a very competent and readable book, even though a bit inadequate in its political analysis. In fact, political power should be thought as a mission rather than as a profession.

K.D. Gangrade

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Gandhi as I Understand Him^{*}

Sam Dhong Rinpoche

I PAY MY sincere homage to Mahatma Gandhi, who on this very day sacrificed his life for the principles of nonviolence. I urge all of us to try our best to implement in our lives the teachings of the Mahatma, which would be the most befitting way to pay homage to him. Naturally, our thoughts and hearts go to those who have suffered immensely during the recent tragic calamity in Gujarat. I pray to the Triple Gem for the peace of those who have lost their lives, and for those who have survived this ordeal, the strength to recover and rehabilitate. Sometimes human beings are helpless in such situations. Despite our deep sympathy, we are unable to do anything tangible except offer our prayers and verbal consolations. Many years ago, when my understanding of Gandhi was very immature, I read somewhere a statement of Albert Einstein: "Generations to come will scarcely believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth." At the time I felt this was poetic exaggeration. Now, since my understanding of the Mahatma has gradually grown, I realize that nothing can be truer than Einstein's statement. Many times I also wonder how this kaliyuga could produce such an extraordinarily great person. And sometimes I think only the soul of India, the Arya vart, can produce such enlightened ones. The personality of Mahatma Gandhi and his vast philosophy, covering every aspect of human knowledge, can never be evaluated in a person's lifetime.

Numerous lives are needed to study and understand his thoughts and teachings. The physical volumes of his writings alone are so numerous that a person like me cannot hope to read them all in one incarnation. The more I try to understand them, the more I realize that his teachings are far beyond my comprehension, yet they have benefited my life immensely.

^{*}This article is a slightly revised version of the Twenty-seventh Gandhi Peace Foundation lecture delivered on the Martyre's day on 30 January 20001 at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi.

Today I feel if I were not exposed to Gandhi's teachings, my understanding of Buddhism would be far inferior and superficial. Therefore I know that I am incompetent to say anything that could claim to be an interpretation of the Mahatma's philosophy. I can only share some of my immature thoughts with you from the level of my understanding of the Mahatma, which may not be correct. For that reason, I intentionally chose the title of my talk today to be "Gandhi, as I understand him." I will not dwell in detail on the philosophy of Gandhi, as most of you know it much better than I do. My presentation will only focus on how much the Mahatma's discourse has benefited various religious traditions as well as humanity at large.

Gandhi's greatest contribution to humanity can be summed up in three unique and extraordinary discourses given by him:

- (i) The reinterpretation of nonviolence based on truth, including the concept of Satyagraha, the equality of men, and Sarwa Dharma Sambhava (equal respect for all religions);
- (ii) The understanding of modern civilization developed on science and technology; and
- (iii) The concept of gram swaraj (village self-rule) as a way of perfect living.

The Reinterpretation of Nonviolence Based on Truth

From times immemorial, the world's religious traditions have recommended nonviolence and have condemned violence in various ways. As the oldest still living civilization of the world, India has a very long tradition of nonviolence both as a religious teaching and social ethic. With the emergence of Buddhism and Jainism, the principle of nonviolence became particularly important, and the entire teachings of these religions were woven around this principle. Nevertheless, both of these Shramne traditions remained oriented toward salvation or renunciation. Neither of them taught much social philosophy nor did they interfere in the socio-political systems of their times. State management and social customs were also not very affected by the religious teachings of nonviolence. The perseverance of the nonviolence principle, almost to extremes, was practiced only in the community of monks and nuns. The lay society remained almost at the status quo, where they were before the appearance of the Buddha and Mahavir.

Thus the implementation of total nonviolence in the running of states and societies was considered impossible. This dichotomy between religious teachings and actual living of ordinary people remained unchanged for thousands of years. In Buddhist countries the objective of the state was considered to protect and serve the Dharma. In Tibet, particularly since the 13th century AD, monks and religious teachers assumed the responsibility of head of state, and the entire nation was devoted to the promotion of

Dharma in various ways. Since 1642 until 1959, successive Dalai Lamas and their regents ruled the nation.

The same is the case with many Buddhist states such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar and Bhutan. However, none of these could conceive a practice of total nonviolence management, a demilitarised nation, and nonviolent politics to achieve the objectives of their statehood. Everyone had almost assumed that the teaching of nonviolence is only applicable for an individual's life, and whoever wished to practice it should renounce the world, become a monk or nun, or disappear into the Himalayas. Therefore, Buddhism and Jainism have been accused of being escapist religions. It is a cause for shame on our part that we have never thought of the universal applicability of nonviolence to every sphere of life, including the social, economic and political. Otherwise, the principle itself would not be a complete one.

On the other hand, many strong believers of nonviolence teachings and the principle of tolerance have given up resisting any violence and injustice. They interpreted nonviolence as non-resistance, thus tolerating all kinds of repression, torture and injustice. Although the Buddha taught that tolerance of injustice would be a misconception of the real meaning of tolerance (mithya tolerance) and would amount to approval of injustice, no Buddhist teacher has been able to evolve a principle to resist injustice nonviolently.

Many Christians misunderstand the teaching of Jesus, "resist no evil," as literal and totally giving up any resistance to evil acts. It was Tolstoy and the Mahatma who could address this great misunderstanding of religious teachings and evolve the principle of nonviolent active resistance. Therefore, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi is the pioneer who showed humanity how the principle of nonviolence, much emphasized by Buddhism, Jainism and many other religions, should not and cannot be confined to religious practitioners alone, but rather how it has universal applicability. There is every possibility of managing a state and running a society without violence, and of resisting all kinds of evil acts and injustices very effectively through nonviolent Satyagraha. For me, it is an eye opener to realise how ignorant we were about the universal nature of the power of nonviolence.

The Mahatma, while remaining a staunch and sincere Hindu, also had the understanding and courage to express what the real tenets of the Sanatam Dharma are and what are the unholy misconceptions polluting the Hindu tradition. He re-established the equality of humanity in Hinduism, devoted his life to the eradication of inequality based on the caste system, and removed the misconception of untouchability in Hindu society. Similarly, he fought against the system of child marriage and dishonour of widows. These teachings and actions of the Mahatma have done immense service to the Hindu religious traditions.

Likewise, Gandhi's concept of Sarva Dharma Sambhava—equal respect for all religions—was another invaluable contribution to all religious traditions. During his time there was a great deal of religious disharmony,

and at best the so-called liberal religious leaders could think of and talk about was religious tolerance. One of the meanings of "tolerance" is the capacity to withstand something unpleasant. Gandhi's use of the word *sambhava* (respect) has profoundly transformed the basic attitude of people for other religious traditions.

The Evils of Modern Civilization

The second greatest contribution of Gandhi to humanity was his reassessment of the shortcomings of modern civilization. A natural reaction to long-perpetuated irreligious dogmas and atrocities committed by institutions and churches in the name of religion, led to the dawn of secular principles in the West. The period referred to as the Renaissance and Enlightenment paved the way for the separation of secular from religious activities.

Although in the beginning it appeared to be attractive, reasonable, and logical, eventually it led to the total divorce of secular society from spirituality, and matter from the mind.

Despite deep-rooted demerits in this whole process, no one was willing to criticise it, as everyone wanted to appear as an updated and educated person. Furthermore, the growth of scientific knowledge and technology had spread immeasurable blind faith in them, such that no one dared to think of finding any fault with science. Very easily science became "scientism" and people began to worship it, even though it brought a rapid increase in wars, violence, imperialism and colonialism. Two world wars were fought, along with the catastrophe of the genocide of Jewish people. Similarly, millions of innocent humans as well as animals and plants perished within minutes in Hiroshima and Nagasaki—all a direct result of the growth of science and technology. Yet no one had either the wisdom or the courage to condemn modern civilization as a whole.

Not even religious scholars or polited leaders pointed out the evils of science and technology. On the contrary, they were trying to prove their religions were "scientific." There are a large number of books and authors who did extensive work to portray Buddhism as a scientific religion. Only Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi had the wisdom and courage to call a spade a spade. He very clearly taught us the evils of modern civilization, calling it *Shaitanik* or *kaliyuga*. He wrote it as far back as 1909, when no one had even dreamed of the demerits and shortcomings of modern civilization. Everyone, particularly the educated and elite, including celebrated Indian leaders, were all out for modernization and industrialization of the nation, with a "scientific temperament." I bow to Gandhi for his singular insight and courage regarding his attitude toward modern civilization. His *Hind Swaraj* contains the core of all his teachings and, for one, it is more sacred than the *Dharmapad*. This humble booklet embraces universal wisdom, and only the insights enshrined therein can save the future of humanity and the planet.

Some recent writings have tried to argue that Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* cannot be taken literally, and that it should be understood as the Mahatma's utterance on a specific occasion for a certain audience in a particular context. It is true that Gandhi was generally not concerned with appearing consistent. He admitted it was more important for him to change his mind according to the call of Truth. He even warned his readers in 1933 that with respect to any inconsistency they may find in his writings, they should choose the later statement on the same subject. But regarding *Hind Swaraj*, after thirty years since its writing, he reaffirmed in 1938 that if he were to write it again, he might alter some of the language, but he saw nothing to make him alter the views expounded in it.

The Concept of Gram Swaraj as a Way of Perfect Living

Gandhi's third great contribution to humanity is the concept of swaraj in general and gram swaraj in particular. As mentioned earlier, the perception of violence in ancient religious traditions is incomplete in modern times, as the nature of violence has been greatly expanded. Yet most people cannot properly realize it or find ways and means of refraining from violence. In ancient society, people indulged in violence compelled mainly by reasons of survival. At most, they might have used violence for wealth and territory. A clear demarcation was visible between violence and nonviolence. Violence was direct killing, stealing, and so on, which was recognized by sensible people, and they could stay away from it by using their will.

But today, due to the growth of modernity, violence has crept into the basic fibre of society. Structural violence is so intense and cruel and, at the same time, so subtle and difficult to recognize by ordinary people. In today's consumerist society, growing swiftly due to the forces of globalization, it is difficult to find even a glass of water, in the process of procuring it by oneself, that is free from violence. We can become nonviolent only if we totally change our lifestyle. No amount of meditation, prayers, retreats, or engaging in selfless social service will lead to a nonviolent life unless a person withdraws completely from consumerist society. On a daily basis, each individual is consistently engulfed by evil and violence. We are no longer consuming commodities—commodities are consuming us. Under such circumstances, Gandhi's teaching of gram swaraj as a perfect way of living is the only remedy to remain an integrated individual, as well as to save the world from total destruction.

Humanity is facing five great challenges. Each one of them threatens the basic existence of our life systems and of the planet:

- (a) Uncontrolled increase in human population, particularly in the so-called third world countries.
- (b) Ever-increasing disparity between continents, nations and classes of people. Not only in the exploitation and injustice by the rich to

the poor rapidly increasing the gap between them, but the population living below the poverty line is also growing day by day. Eighty per cent of the world's resources are misused by twenty per cent of its population, so the remaining eighty per cent of the people on this earth have to live or die with the left over twenty per cent of resources. Yesterday I heard on the BBC that Mr Kofi Annan, the United Nations Secretary General, while addressing an international gathering in Switzerland, said that if the process of globalization does not benefit the poor, there would be a great disaster. This is a most naive and ironic statement, because hoping for the globalization process to benefit the poor is like sowing the seed of an apple tree and hoping that one day it will bear mangos. Disasters are already taking place everywhere, but the people whose eyes are blinded by wealth cannot see them. They will only wake up when the whole world is obliterated!

- (c) Environmental degradation. So-called modern development has damaged the world environment and ecosystem to the extent that clean water and air to drink and breathe have become more and more scarce. Global warming, ozone layer damage, and spread of radioactive substances from nuclear wastes and weapons use are beyond any remedy. Droughts, floods and earthquakes are occurring more frequently in recent years all over the world. This is living evidence of the current abnormal state of global environmental conditions. Disasters in Uttarkashi, Assam, Bihar, Orissa and particularly the recent tragedy in Gujarat are the direct result of human disregard for the harm to nature. Many lives were lost not only due to the earthquake, but also because of our modern way of living, including the construction of multi-storeyed houses on seismic fault lines through human negligence and dishonesty.
- (d) Direct violence such as war, fear of war, the aftermath of war, and all kinds of terrorism are ever increasing at the cost of millions of human lives. Today, violence and militarism have reached such an extent that they even indulge in the use of force in the name of peacekeeping. Today's world managers are so inane that they do not hesitate to use self-contradictory terms such as "peacekeeping force." Of course, all these conflicts are intentionally promoted and maintained by the weapons industry lobby.
- (e) Last but not least—cultural and religious intolerance. various religious traditions are considered as the ultimate source of happiness and salvation, and culture is supposed to be an expression of the religious and spiritual mindset of the people. However, humanity has converted the name of religion and diversity of culture into a source of division and conflict among human beings.

Any one of these problems has the power to extinguish the human race from the surface of the earth. Ironically, science, technology, and the so-called ultra modern or post-modern civilization do not have any solutions to resolve them. This is commonly admitted by the people who themselves advocate modernity and scientific technology. Therefore, if humanity is to survive and future generations given the right to live, there is no other alternative but to take refuge in the teachings of the Mahatma—the gram swaraj, the principles of self-sufficiency and self-controlled living, and to differentiate needs from wants, to free ourselves from the slavery of wealth and commodities, and to regain the right to self-determination between real needs and greed, or superfluous wants imposed by industrial tycoons. It is for this reason that today the majority of sensitive people in the world are taking the Mahatma more and more seriously. In each continent and country, wherever I go, a large section of people are trying to understand and follow his teachings. The world's northernmost university, in Tromsø, Norway, has erected a statue of Gandhi and also established a Gandhian Studies Department. In the southernmost universities in Cape Town, South Africa, and also in Tasmania, Australia, Gandhi is the most popular figure. All over the globe, in the East or in the West, North or South, irrespective of religious denominations and political ideologies, Gandhi has become an ideal for many. Now we have the best opportunity for India to assume once again the role of Jagat Guru and show the only alternative path as taught by the Mahatma for the happy and sustainable future of humanity.

Identity and Ecological Politics

Ho-Won Jeong

IN THIS INTRINSICALLY dynamic and interconnected world, all organisms are parts of a web characterized by holistic ecological relationships. The notion of an ecosystem is represented in the interactive relationships of different forms of animate and inanimate beings. It is essential for the planet's future survival that nature and society be dialectically interlinked and complementing each other. The root of the modern ecological crisis is attributed to disconnectedness of humans with the larger whole. The potential for the development and politicisation of eccentric identities lies in the way the scale and scope of the contemporary environmental crisis demands transformative project.

The key to development of an eccentric identity becomes the ability to reconceptualise one's own place and the willingness to recognise the identity of human beings as a species within the ecosystem of which we are a part. In understanding human connectedness to the natural world, identity does not need to be dependent upon a negative reference to an external other with the subject/object distinction disappearing. Based on this common ground, diverse theoretical expressions and approaches can be acknowledged in examining the process to extend our sense of self to nature.

In this paper, various sources of eccentric identification are compared in terms of the degree to which identity politics demands high levels of commitment while not excluding others. The questions of regional cultural, gender, and other social differences are inevitably blended in the discussion of identity. More specifically, we are looking here at the dynamics of identity construction involving diverse values as well as political and social structures. Overall, the conception that the whole must take precedence over the parts is consistent with transformation in our mode of social and political life.

Ecological Identification

Though nature is an object of identification, ecological identity refers to a person's connection to the earth, perception of the ecosystem, and direct experience of nature.¹ Conceptualization of non-humans is predicated by reference to the human domain. Ecological identity is thus linked to the ways human consciousness is shaped by concerns for the environment. The conventional notion of the self can be creatively expanded with a wider construction of identity. Eccentric identity extends beyond a sense of one's personal self to embrace all beings and ecological processes. Identification with nature is made possible by the transcendence of the self.²

In the formation of eccentric identity, there is neither requirement for alien others, nor can there be claims of superiority over others. More specifically, compared with ethnic and other social identities derived from negative identification with external others, an ecocentric identity does not significantly rely, if at all, upon reference to an external other, in considering that non-human nature should not depend on acts of human valuation.

In opposition to reductionism, ecocentrism perceives the world as the body of an expanded self. As P. Taylor argues, "each ecosystem is a small universe itself in which the interactions of its various species populations comprise an intricately woven network of cause-effect relations."³ In overcoming human/nature dualism by a process of wider identification, human beings are not merely considered as members of various social groupings but as components of a fundamentally interlinked and interdependent "web of nature."⁴

Since the needs of both the planet and the person have become one with perceptual boundaries breaking down, one's own fate is intimately bound up with that of other species on the planet. In biocentric views, which stress direct links between humans and the ecological world, the role of humanity, as an integral part of a much larger whole, is not defined as separate from and in position to nature. There are "no absolute dividing lines between the living and the non-living, the animate and the inanimate, or the human and the non-human."⁵

Internalisation of ecological understanding based on identification with the biosphere is characterized by the process of discovering a new level of meaning associated with self-actualization for all beings. With an overall scheme of orientation towards inclusiveness, "one comes to feel a sense of communality with all other entities," connected to a single unfolding reality.⁶ The self is thus seen as "a developing whole, a relative unity-in-diversity, a whole in constant process of self-transformation and self-transcendence."⁷ Self-realization to be achieved through extending awareness and receptivity with nature is a transformative process to heal ourselves in the world.

Ecocentric identity does not involve a loss or negation of the self with the dissolution of particular beings but an opportunity to recover one's

true nature. In traditional views of identity, this holistic relationship between the self and the cosmos may appear to imply loss of individuality, autonomy and, in particular, self-esteem. In practice, however, seeing the self as part of the cosmos would mean widening the sense of self and hence an expansion in the scope of identity. One's dialectical interaction with other people, the community, land, and the larger natural world is comprehensible for personal self-realization.⁸ This would be similar to, but much greater than, that experienced through an exclusive identification with a people or nation. Thus the apparent eclipsing or immersion of the self within the greater whole by taking one's place in a particular bioregional ecosystem or the large biosphere is not experienced as a loss.

Search for a larger self necessitates a constant mediation between one's individual self and the whole universe, in that self-actualization does not create artificial boundaries. The realization that "life is fundamentally one" provides a cosmological basis for identification. An ecological self can be considered not as an entity, or a thing, but as "an opening to discovering what some call the Absolute."⁹ Humans and nature are not divided as subject and object, invoking the notion of contingency and participation. Our experience of the world is enriched by the recognition of interconnectedness, interdependence, and diversity of all phenomena. The notion of autonomy is applied to a broader and more encompassing pattern of layered interrelationships in the biotic community, with each layer's role being defined in concentric circles.¹⁰

Intuitive and Cognitive Dimensions

Development of ecocentric identity requires a new level of intuitive and cognitive understanding of ecology. Psychological maturity is associated with the movement from an atomistic, ego-centric sense of self towards an ecocentric, transpersonal sense of self. With the perceptions of nature being brought to the forefront of awareness, the natural is not conceptually divorced from the human. The affective perceptions of ecological relationships reflect a high level of knowledge and action.

A spiritual vision of the unity and sacredness of nature promotes the highest form of understanding where the mind is united with the whole of nature in an intuitive mode of knowing. The enlargement of self allows the consideration of a wider set of concerns, and division is healed through a unifying process. Compassion and empathetic feelings towards the natural world flow from the recognition of an individual's way of being in the world. The impetus behind biocentric attitudes is simple, yet enduring, powerful feelings for love of nature with the celebration of another's existence.¹¹ This act of loving nature is not an intellectual shadow of the real thing, but represents "a blissful state that warms and animates everything around us."¹² Our sense of self is vastly expanded, as our loving the world bursts the bars of our emotional limitations.

The underlying ideas behind ecocentrism are essentially romantic, reflecting the belief that "nature and humanity belong in a organic relationship best understood and developed through feeling and insight."¹³ Thus ecocentrism, in its various guises, expresses both a preference for emotion over reason and an essentialist view of nature. It is, in consequence, at odds with rationalist/modernist and, indeed, post-modern conceptions of identities as relatively fluid and transitional.

The concerns with the preservation of biological species and their support systems constitute part of our basic nature. Plant and animal species have to be saved for the intrinsic values of their own well-being and flourishing; respect for the richness and diversity of all life forms is contrasted with resource protection for maintaining human economic activities. The perception of the expansive circles of interconnectedness leads to a critical reflection and introspection of ecosystem decline. In considering that it is difficult to imagine the world without trees, flowers, and birds, contact with nature is almost universal needs.

Ecocentrism is deeply satisfactory to psychological needs since experiences of communality with other entities through personal involvement offer potentially great emotional rewards. By ending the fundamental alienation of human beings from their true selves and promoting "an ineffable sense of at-homeness in Nature, and a disposition to live in harmony with it," an eco-identity brings to its bearer freedom from the "tyranny of personal desires" and the opportunity to cultivate "peace and joy."¹⁴

Ethical Considerations

The links to the cosmos can also be developed by morality based on universal principles of care to take responsibility for others. Special relationships, or empathy, with particular aspects of nature provide the depth of interest that is not otherwise possible. Introduction of ecological projects, both spiritual and material, can depend on an ethic of care for the natural world associated with affective identification. Responsibilities for the ecological world connected to the self can provide an important basis for acquiring a wider, more generalized identity.¹⁵

By encountering nature simply as a collection of neutral things, we deny it "any sense of the character of worldhood."¹⁶ Ethical and spiritual identification with nature is made through non-utilitarian values such as love of nature, in that the appreciation of the material usefulness of nature alone generally does not produce a sense of attachment. Ecological values and aesthetic and philosophical convictions are different from a non-dimensional utilitarian end towards the satisfaction of rational self-interest. The expression of ethical norms and values is "motivated by strong feelings" as well as by "having a clear cognitive function."¹⁷

To repudiate the notions of human superiority necessitates a fundamental reassessment of the essence of the self, revealing the internal

and external referents of one's own identity. Forming a wider sense of identity permits people to care for the ecosystems instead of treating them as mere commodities. It challenges the instrumental treatment of the other based on sharply defined ego boundaries which stress separation of humans from other species.

Moral dimensions of ecological projects require sympathy with and sensitivity to the situation and fate of particular others. People, as moral agents, are expected to embrace the obligation to respect both living and non-living objects on the planet. An environmental ethic does not derive from the technological vision of the world but naturally emerges from love for what humans identify themselves as part of. The fundamental sense of interconnectedness between all life forms implied by an ecocentric identity rejects modernist conceptions that consider the object in terms of self-interest.

The expanded self has to be based on a critique of modern egoism rather than its extension. The denial of human superiority is made by recognizing each individual organism as "a teleological center of life, pursuing its own good in its own way."¹⁸ The basis for wider and deeper identity can be created by unbridling egoism of the particular and by conceiving of all living things as entities possessing inherent worth.¹⁹ The essential core of deep ecology therefore criticises the self rooted in rational egoism that derives from the anthropocentric, materialist assumptions of western Enlightenment thought. Since the ideologies of modernity, in particular liberal capitalism, destroyed the erection of the earth as living being, an industrial society tends to overlook the fact that humans are part of nature.

Ecocentrism guided by the norms of self-realization for all beings emphasises a shift away from anthropocentric humanism that puts nature into a realm of instrumentality.²⁰ An ethical position of ecocentrism lies in treating all of the multilayered parts of the biotic community as valuable for their own sake.²¹ Epistemological shift for biospheric egalitarianism illustrates the fact that while humans have a unique capacity to abuse and exploit other species and, ultimately, to destroy the planet, they do not have a greater intrinsic value than any others.

The discovery of an ecological self leads to its defence and interaction with it. Reordering human relations with nature, in all its facets, follows the reflection of the true position of humans. With the disappearance of distinctive differentiation between higher and lower life forms in nature, particular entities should not impose their will unduly upon others.²² Humans have to learn how to live in harmony with non-human species and the ecosystems of which they are all a part.

A Social Context

Ecological politics cannot ignore the implication of ecocentric identity for the transformation of social relations and its ultimate impact on nature.

Beyond spiritual commitment and experience, political questions are involved in the determination of our links to nature. As discourse on nature is placed into a broad social context, ecological crisis is attributed to the social order itself. The deadly destruction of the natural world is rooted in the creation of human hierarchies.

Whereas deep ecology stresses nature's equal right to existence, social ecology focuses on a political community of humans. The persistence of power structures cannot be separated from views concerning nature. The natural world has been pillaged for prestige, profit, and control in an inequalitarian system that allows the elite to subjugate other people. The structuring of the natural world into a vertical chain of being originates from the establishment of authoritarian social relations. With the rise of human domination, "the seeds are planted for a belief that nature not only exists as a world apart, but that it is hierarchically organised and can be dominated."²³

The understanding of ecological identity not only serves as but also depends on the critique of unjust social order. Social ecologists see the structures of social inequality as both prior to, and a source of, domination over nature. Thus the question of our proper place in the rest of nature is not distinguished from the issue of an appropriate type of social and political arrangements. Hierarchy, as a social construction of a stabilizing or ordering principle, does not have a natural basis.²⁴ Instrumental values, responsible for the exploitation of nature, are associated with the control of human behaviour that limits freedom and prevents self-realization.

In considering that power relations and cultural norms of a contemporary society legitimize a dangerously dysfunctional relationship between human collectivities and the ecosystems, the existing social structure needs to be transformed to eliminate the oppression of both nature and humans. The acceptance of the equal worth of all life forms as well as the essential interrelatedness and interdependence of the ecosystems would inevitably result from the rejection of all forms of exploitation. In social ecology, ecological issues are approached through campaigns against the structures of social injustice that are deeply embedded in hierarchical relations.

The well-being of the natural world is bound up with the creation of egalitarian human relations based on democratic political and socio-economic arrangements.²⁵ Social malaise and the traditional distance from the natural world can be overcome by decentering the human world. Ecological identity can be regarded as truly emancipatory through its social links—it would end both alienation and domination. At the same time, the bifurcation between the social and natural realms would dissipate by transposing the non-hierarchical character of natural ecosystems to society.

An ecological identity is compatible with social organisations that encourage symbiosis, diversity, interconnectedness, stability, and

flexibility. For transformative politics, considerable efforts can be made to dismantle unequal structures by bringing about the changes in human values and behaviour. Ecological sustainability is attainable in grassroots democracy with decentralisation and autonomy.²⁶ More specifically, ecological concerns are more satisfactorily met in small-scale, egalitarian, anarchistic societies.

Feminine Identification with Nature

Instead of taking universalistic positions, ecofeminism illustrates the personal sexual and emotional domains of human experience often relegated to women in seeking to enlarge our understanding of nature. The form of identification is gender specific with the ecological self associated with femininity. The alien other of masculine identity is negatively defined against feminine identity associated with the realm of the physical. The structure of power infused with masculine norms and values brings a certain equivalence to the relationship between women and the natural world. The readiness for this special affinity arises from an analogy between women's position of being oppressed and the destruction of nature. The work of nature is unappreciated by human existence in the way women are overshadowed. The feminine character of nature is, therefore, contrasted with the masculine values of dominant Western cultures.

Gendered structures of power and inequality underlie and legitimise disjunctures between human organisations and ecosystemic needs.²⁷ Humans are not equally alienated from, and exploitative of, the natural world. The logic behind the inferiorisation of non-human nature and the oppression of women has been justified by patriarchy which serves as a symbolic, historical source of oppression. In masculine values and their instrumentalism, women and nature are regarded as subjugated other. Through a special convergence of interests between feminism and ecology, the devaluation of nature is interpreted as a product of masculine consciousness.²⁸

The patriarchal aspect of modernity has been promoted by a totalising attitude that seeks to erase difference in order to attain a problematic unity. The domination of an ecological system "as feminine" is constructed on capitalist patriarchal culture of modernist discourse that treats nature merely as material for man's appropriation.²⁹ As nature is tamed and subjugated to masculine will, there is a necessary connection between patriarchy and anthropocentrism. In the logic of these dualist systems of thought, identification of men with the "human" and the realm of the mental permits transcendence—superiority over, freedom from, control of nature.³⁰ The rationalist conception of the modern self formed through masculine values is grounded in anthropocentric human self-interest.

Empowerment for women is based on a critique of the twin oppression of women and non-human nature. Feminist interest in emancipation from

the status of otherness through the elimination of patriarchy translates into efforts to free nature.³¹ At the same time, an ethic of care for the environment reflects women's experience of vulnerability and interdependence. Many Third-World women's struggle to protect indigenous forests against the introduction of commercial agricultural production is related to not only their economic subsistence but also to cultural survival.

The core of ecological identity can be supported and constituted by the feminine notion of cooperation, mutual support, and nurturance as opposed to masculine competitive values. The earth and women, equated with maternalist values, are revered as the nurturers of life against hierarchy and destruction. The recovery of a spiritual relationship with the earth, as mother, is essential to an ecocentric worldview, and indeed to the future of the planet, for "one does not readily slay a mother, dig into her entrails for gold or mutilate her body."³² In some non-Western cultures, maternalist perceptions of the earth as the nurturers of life continue to influence the behaviour of humans.

Bioregional Identity

In the bioregional perspectives, an ecological identity is based upon a specific sense of place with the expression of its concerns through very specific and local responsibilities of care. Cultural norms are a central aspect of human experience that mediates the relationship between social and natural systems.³³ In considering that ecological systems can be understood in terms of characteristics of specific regions and related human responses, a bioregional identity derives from belonging to and forming part of the local ecosystem. Ecological integrity emerges in each region with its own unique identity.

Bioregional identity is formed by the interaction between geographical characteristics and cultural value systems. Increased differentiation from other regions would be necessary for cultural homogenization within communities that inhabit a particular bioregion. With the understandings and practices of human collectivities tied to the boundaries of a local ecosystem, the content of ecological identity is contingent upon people's unique connections to a particular place and its natural world.³⁴

Through a learning process, human values and norms will be gradually adapted to the needs of local ecosystems. Ecological identification can be based on highly particularistic meanings attached to "a place that motivates passion of many modern conservationist and love of many indigenous peoples for their land."³⁵ In particular, cultural adaptation to the ecological needs of local places is well-revealed in the thinking and practices of indigenous peoples.

Despite the estrangement of indigenous culture from nature following modernisation and industrial capitalism, the understanding of how to live in, rather than with, nature is not completely lost. Rather it is deeply buried in cultural memory, so that knowledge of place, within us, can be uncovered

and revered through a process of "rehabilitation."³⁶ In order to becoming native to a place, we have to be aware of the particular ecological relationships operating within and around us. Bioregional awareness enhances "a kind of ecological citizenship," encouraging individuals to "learn to become respectful" of "an ecological place, rather than transforming the place to suit themselves."³⁷

In ecological thinking, interdependence provides a fundamental basis for ecological diversity with variations in genes, niches, and adaptive traits facilitating species survival. Since cooperation between bioregions is essential for safeguarding larger ecosystems, the locally based ethic of care for the bioregion should not undermine the characteristics of other communities. On the other hand, the experiment in the local community can be applied outside of that locality, and the experience can be compatible with the maintenance of a large ecological system. Regional ecological sustainability does not necessarily have to involve competitive needs with other regions due to the fact that qualitative development can be achieved through differentiation.

Bioregionalism differs from deep ecology in ways that enable it to "straddle green romanticism and green rationalism."³⁸ Its local focus could prove important for social learning. On the other hand, bioregional perspectives can be criticized for a lack of a pragmatic adaptation to present circumstances, and have been pointed out as naive "anarchic primitivism" that, beyond a way of thinking, is not reflected in an actual way of living.³⁹

In modern societies, community cohesiveness, the preservation of the local bioregion, and the protection of indigenous life forms have been diluted by the influx of new residents and the import of non-native plants or animals. While the framework for experiments with "living in nature" has to derive from celebrating an important aspects of human experience, our recent sentiment towards the gradual demise of wildlife is related to increasing rootlessness represented by experiences of greater mobility and the dissolution of local communities.⁴⁰

Politicisation of Ecocentric Identity

Identity politics involves the prioritisation of one particular facet of identity over others, in a manner that influences political choices and, potentially, provides a basis for social action. The prescriptions of ecocentric identity are consistent with notions of identity politics, in which a dominant identification is appealed to and acted upon.⁴¹ The impact of an ecocentric approach is profound in the translation of environmental anguish into a radical transformation of human identity. In ecocentrism, the solution to ecological crisis is sought in broad identification with an appeal based on love, inescapable duty, and potential sacrifice. The impulse to defend the existential rights of wilderness stems from great sensitivity to the needs of various life forms as well as from individual communities.

Various interpretations of humans' position within the broader ecosystem and other sources of identification have different implications for transformative politics. Opportunities for structural transformation do not arise from the contingent and shifting base of identification, whereas essentialist treatments of identity are conducive to commitment, even self-sacrifice. The relationship of the self to others is represented and expressed in a non-conformist manner by powerful claims about identity and community contained in green culture. A change in individual action based on reorientation towards a new relationship with the natural world would ultimately be demanded by the politicisation of identity.

Ecofeminists see the expanded self as the completion of a process of masculine universalisation, moral abstraction, and disconnection. The emphasis on "wider identification" is interpreted as the self-expansion of the modern masculine ego. In deep ecologist views, on the other hand, the manifestations of general anthropocentric humanism do not necessarily disappear with liberation from oppressive gender or class relations of patriarchy.⁴² Moreover, a claim for a more encompassing ecocentric identity would not easily derive from maternalist essentialism that has exclusive identification of women with nature.

Homogeneous ecological identity is difficult to achieve due to the social divisions of race, class, and gender. The strength and endurance of existing social institutions reduce the impact of the political appeal of universalistic approaches to ecological identity on the public. The principal focus of an emancipatory ecological praxis assumes parallels in challenges to the logic or symbolic structure of different kinds of domination. It directly questions deeply entrenched cultural/religious understandings concerning what it means to be a human being—a member of superior species at the pinnacle of the evolutionary process and answerable only to other humans or, perhaps, the gods. In the thinking of many deep ecologists, the emphasis on social norms and values demonstrates a clear tendency to prioritise social justice over ecological imperatives.⁴³

The boundary between the natural world and society remains a contested interface with the impact of culture on the way people constructs representations of their social and physical environment. Due to differences in interpretation of culture/nature relationships both across and within societies, ecological thought defies categorisation into traditional schools. Assessing the position of humans in nature is not able to escape infinite variety. Identification with cosmopolitan or universal values does not easily supplant more particularistic identities such as affective ties of kinship, although kinship based attachments can be inferiorised by universalisation of the superiority of reason. A relative lack of an emphasis placed on personally based identification leads to ignorance of particular connections.

Social and personal identity strengthens feelings of an attachment to particular areas of land, yielding ties as special and powerful as emotional

attachments to the kin. In spite of the fact that the bioregional promotion of a sense of rootedness is regarded not simply as ethnic but as "biotic," the potential to politicise a sense of place along ethnic lines remains strong. The bioregionalist appeal to a local identity can be easily supported by the primordialist emphasis upon affective identification with the known and exclusion of the unknown and unfamiliar.

By being marked by a sense of ownership as well as a sense of belonging, an environmental identity subsumed within primordialism encourages the extension or enlargement of individual identity to a nation.⁴⁴ The rewards for the individuals offered by ethno-national or religious identification are significant because they include not only a sense of membership in a wider community but also a sense of continuity with the past, and with the future, which serves to assuage the knowledge of human mortality.⁴⁵

The close association between ethnic identification and home place would overshadow the formation of broad ecological identity. In fact, the development of a local identity could, in some circumstances, be diverted into an ethnic politics of exclusion. Ethnic closure against outsiders may happen with the cultural homogenisation of communities through adaptation to local ecosystems. The politicisation of regional identities along ethnic lines would engender conflicts of interest between bioregions.

Narrowly based ecological identity thus does not prove to be a satisfactory solution to pressing transborder problems, since it is alien to a broader ethic for complex and interrelated ecosystems extending beyond one's own borders. Personally based identification can slip so easily into parochial attachment and proprietorship. Territorial governance is inadequately and poorly equipped to foster borderless ecocentric identity. The prospects for the sustainable environment are not bright if a nation-state, detached from the planetary whole, remains a dominant form of governance with its power for struggle to control land and other resources.⁴⁶

Despite its variants, radical ecologism is opposed to managerial environmentalism whose goal is limited merely to seeking the preservation and efficient use of resources for human prosperity. It questions the organising principles and value systems that sustain modern political and economic life. Beyond challenging the virtues of modern rationality that justifies destructive treatment of nature, most importantly, ecocentric identity is geared towards restoring the complexities of the ecological web of life as a politically salient goal.

Ecological Politics

Human individuals' sense of who they are and where they belong is involved in prioritising ecologically functional ways of being and constructing societies whose shared norms and values contribute to a harmonious relationship between nature and culture. It can be argued that

the identification with a large whole should not be a purely logical process. The framework of ethical universalisation may be seen as being seriously incomplete when it is reduced simply to duty or obligation.

Ecocentrism's challenge to modern orthodoxy has been widely resisted and misrepresented given that it is seen as the idealisation of nature. For many individuals, the radical change of values and of conscious about their stewardship by ecological values. The appeals to preserving the wilderness can be made by justifications, ranging from protection of wilderness as a life support system for humans to aesthetic and religious experiences of wilderness.

As opposed to an anthropogenic perspective, ecocentrism stresses that a large ecological community should not be treated as serving instrumental value in human decision-making. It does not necessarily mean that humans have to live in impoverished conditions, nor does it imply a complete abandonment of cultural heritage.⁴⁷ The spirituality of place, non-human rights and other emphases on holism are used for mobilization of political support for ecological movements. In the post-material values of the "new middle class," environmental protection produces aesthetically pleasing outcomes or otherwise enhances the quality of human life.⁴⁸

The political programme advocated by the proponents of ecocentrism is essentially nonviolent; it stresses primarily the lifestyle of individuals and communities with a focus on "authenticity," "simplicity," and "naturalness" for the self and an example to others. In biospherical egalitarianism, self-realization is achieved by adopting simple lifestyles in harmony with the environment but not in material abundance and waste. For deep ecologists, "politics is not about devising strategies to achieve tangible goals; rather it is an arena in which different kinds of experiences can be sought and developed."⁴⁹

An ecocentric identity and associated ways of living thus become not simply the means, but also the desired end, of deep green politics. From this perspective, the future of the planet is a matter of strong personal commitment, and it is not something altruistic since the divide between the intrinsically valuable and the useful is meaningless. Self-realisation presupposes reaching the ultimate truth that all living beings are one, individual spirituality cannot be achieved without the essential unity and oneness of life. Violence against nature is violence against ourselves since natural beings are part of us. In consequence, the capacity of this "politics of identity" to extend its influence becomes crucial with education towards expanding the self.

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Gandhi, Globalization, and Quality of Life: A Study in the Ethics of Development

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DEVELOPMENT MODEL AND QUALITY OF LIFE

IT IS AN important objective of every enlightened national government to adopt and execute a development model, strategy, or method, suited to improving the quality of its people's life. The government of a developed nation aims at making the quality still better, even though as it is, it may be quite satisfactory. An underdeveloped, or undeveloped, country has to be more cautious in choosing, as well as in executing, a right method of development. It may be that development in some direction, say, alleviation of poverty, illiteracy, or bad health conditions, etc., for a sizable section of its people, is the crying need of the hour and the available resources are very meagre. It cannot then afford to make one experiment after another and fail several times before chancing to be blessed with a model of development suited for its situation.

An individual's quality of life is determined by a number of factors. His economy is very important but not sufficient to crown it with all that is desirable. Some of the other necessary factors are his attitude towards his surroundings, his sense of values, the amount of leisure he has and the way he spends it, his ability to fulfil his needs, his capability to do well the job he is assigned to do, his education, his reading habits, his sense of self-respect and self-dignity, his dealings with the other members of his family and society, the freedom he has to function as a viable member of his society, etc. It is important to note that in all this it is necessary that he has, or is able to acquire, the resources he needs to fulfil the basic, desirable, needs of his own and of other members of his family in a manner which is consistent with his self-respect and self-dignity. For example, a beggar may

collect at the end of each day so much of money that he not only meets well the needs of his own and of his family, but also saves enough to run a lucrative business of money-lending among his neighbours. But in all likelihood he would not have an uninjured feeling of self-respect, and if he has, our normal reaction would be that it is a perverted feeling.

Nobody has emphasized more, and more sincerely, the need for ameliorating the economic condition of the Indian poor than Gandhi. But still he would not agree with the view that economic well-being of an individual can by itself make the quality of his lifestyle commendable. Rather, he would say that he may still be very low on the cultural-moral scale. This would obviously be true, we can add, of an economically affluent person who takes pride in having bargained successfully with a poor physical labourer to work in his house on a wage much lower than the latter's reasonable daily wage. The following, a scene depicted in an Assamese short story, very well illustrates the point I am trying to make:

A well-to-do "gentleman" buys fish costing sixty rupees and bargains for half an hour with a manual rikshaw-puller to drive him to his residence for a fare less by fifty paisas than the reasonable one demanded by the latter, and feels very happy when the latter agrees to. On reaching his residence he pays the fare and goes inside, forgetting to carry with him the bag containing the fish he had bought. After driving away for some distance from his residence, the rikshaw-puller notices the fish-bag lying on the foot-space of his rikshaw, turns back towards the gentleman's residence, knocks at his door, and offers him the fish-bag. The gentleman is gladdened to get it back and offers him one rupee as a reward. The rickshaw-puller taunts, saying "You were not willing to give me fifty paisas more which I deserved for my hard labour and are now giving me double the amount for my honesty. Keep your one rupee with yourself," and drives back towards the market.

The fish buyer may have the money to buy all that he and his family need and all the goods they need may also be available in the open market. One may say that in the economic sense he has achieved his well-being and he may also feel that he has achieved it in as complete a sense as one can be reasonably expected to have. But it is an anomic well-being because it is denuded, or devoid, of the sense of respect for the dignity of an individual as an individual, of a sense of justice, or fairplay, in human dealings, of a disposition to value human labour whatever its nature or market price may be. The rickshaw-puller's condition may be lacking in so many things, and even if he is satisfied with it, we would say it very much needs to be improved in so many respects. But still the quality of his well-being is superior to the fish-buyer's because of the latter's value-attitudes or dispositions. The fish-buyer's value-attitude is likely to cause some evil, or to make someone suffer an evil for no fault of his. But the rickshaw-puller's is not. As an oft-quoted remark of Plato goes, one who does an evil to someone else is much inferior to him who suffers the evil. And, I would

add, the well-being, or the quality of life, of the doer of an evil is much inferior to that of the sufferer of the evil. The acquisition of this mental good, of the disposition to grade one's well-being not only in terms of his economic prosperity, or of his social or professional status, but also in terms of his value-attitudes, or care for certain values, of his respect for elegance in life and for the dignity of the individual as an individual irrespective of what he is, etc., is also to be taken into account in assessing the quality of his well-being.

The components which make a quality of life reasonably good would generally be the same for all peoples. But it is possible that some individuals of a country lack some of them and other individuals of the same country lack some others. Similarly, it is also possible that individuals of one country lack some which those of another country do not; rather, they lack some others. It is also possible that the individuals of a country lack none of them. But, since it is human nature that one is not satisfied with what he has, no one is likely to think that his quality of life does not need any further improvement. It is clear from all this that the same method of development may not suit all countries, or even all citizens of the same country. But it is also clear that a development mode, or strategy, would be considered appropriate only if it contributes to improving the quality of those individuals' life to improve which it is adopted. And, the adoption of any development strategy, to be pointful must contribute, directly or indirectly, to improving the quality of life of those who are disadvantaged; for example, the people who are below the poverty line, are better off those who suffer from absolute poverty. Absolute poverty is poverty as per any standard of living, whereas the condition of an individual can be called relative poverty in comparison with only the condition of another individual. For example, a professor getting Rs 25,000 per month as his salary is relatively poorer than his physician who earns Rs 50,000 a month and the latter is relatively poorer than his lawyer who earns Rs 1,50,000 a month. A rikshaw-puller, on the other hand, who gets, on an average, Rs 30 a day, and nothing on the day he is too sick to work, is absolutely poor whatever standard of poverty we use.

GANDHI'S MODEL FOR INDIA'S DEVELOPMENT

While conducting the struggle for the country's independence from alien rule, Gandhi had given a model for its development. By development he clearly meant an all-round improvement of an average Indian's quality of life. His understanding, or diagnosis, of India's problems was basically right then and is no less right even today. It cannot be called wrong on the ground that it has failed because it has not been tried in all seriousness.

I have chosen his model for discussion in this essay because it is a competing alternative to the much talked-about, current, one which attaches a very high value to globalization and considers it unavoidable. Gandhi

was not against India's having global contracts, or global collaborative enterprises. But it seems that he would not have preferred globalization to the extent to which, or, in the manner in which, it is being preferred today. He might have rejected it since, in effect, to a very great extent, it means free trade. He is very forthright in saying that "England has sinned against India by forcing free trade upon her."¹ He is in favour of having an indigenous way of development, using, as far as possible, indigenous resources, in keeping with India's cultural and ethical traditions. The idea most foundational to his model is that neither in planning a method of development, nor in its execution, should there be anything which is unethical, or which prompts, or gives an opportunity to, any participant in it to do anything unethical. It may look odd these days to be so much concerned with ethics or morality because, many including a good number of the ruling elite, think that in public life, in one's executing a public project or development scheme, some immoralities are unavoidable or not worth bothering about. That is why immoralities which Gandhi would have considered serious go unnoticed, or are not taken seriously even if noticed.

The Concept of a Self-sustained Village

To develop India is to develop, for Gandhi, its villages. "India is to be found" he says, "not in its few cities but in its 7,00,000 villages."² "I would say that," he continues, "if the village perishes India will perish too. India will be no more India. Her own mission in the world will get lost."³ Developing a village, according to him, is to make it "self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the world."⁴ To make it self-sustained is to enable it to produce most of what it needs to fulfil the basic needs of its people and possibly of some others. It should be made able to grow its food crops, cotton for its cloth, fodder for its cattle, to have facilities for recreation and games, clean drinking water, good sanitation, a theatre, school, facilities of medical treatment, etc., etc. It should be left to develop in such a way that it meets not only the physical needs of its people and of some others, but also provides ample scope for artistic and intellectual pursuits. In such a village "There will be village poets, village artists, village architects, linguists and research workers. In short, there will be nothing in life worth having which will not be had in the villages."⁵

To develop a village, village industries, arts and crafts, must be developed. Villagers who work in these areas are to be helped by making available to them expertise and raw materials they need but lack, and the goods they produce should be brought and used even if they are more expensive and less sophisticated than their equivalents manufactured by big mills. Heavy industrialization or mechanization is needed where the available number of workers is less than what is needed for the works to be

done. Here in India, Gandhi says—and what he says is true now than it was when he said it—that the number of available workers is many times more than the number of works to be done. Therefore large-scale mechanization will increase the number of unemployed men and women which is already too large.

To make villages function in a socially cohesive way, he suggests that each village be left to function as a republic with a *Panchayat*, a group of individuals freely elected by its residents, as its governing agency, taking care of all disputes and managerial problems. The whole country would then be a republic with all the village republics as its building-blocks. When the question of accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few individuals is raised, Gandhi's advice is that the rich millowners and landowners should treat themselves as trustees, or custodians, of the wealth in their possession, and after having only as much as they need for their leading a worthwhile life, the rest of the profit they should distribute among those who do the work that has fetched the profit so that they too lead a worthwhile life.

The Gandhian model has as an ingredient of it, the suggestion that every Indian should have, or inculcate, an attitude of mind which prefers an indigenous good to a foreign-made one, and a good produced by a villager-industry to one produced by a mill. The inculcation of this mentality is the basic theme of his gospel of *Swadeshi*. His belief is that if we have the Swadeshi spirit in us, villages and village industries would flourish, the rich would not be greedy but treat those who work for them as equals, the Panchayat would work in a fair manner, and the government of the country would provide all possible help. Naturally, then, there would be an all-round development of India and the quality of life lived by an average Indian will definitely be one which we cherish or should cherish.

GLOBALIZATION AND ITS LIKELY ETHICAL FALL-OUT

The role of globalization can be pointfully discussed only when we keep in mind a particular country, which is planning to adopt, or has actually adopted, a policy of globalization. The country which I have in mind in the present discussion is obviously India. I would discuss it with an eye on the role of globalization as an agent of development for improving the quality of the life lived by an average Indian, more specifically, a disadvantaged Indian. It should be an agent for some development even if it only adds a new shine to the lusture of the life of an affluent Indian. It would do that, for example, by making available to him an air-conditioned motor car which is extremely expensive but jerkproof even on a road which has more than two feet deep crevices and more than three feet high bumps after a distance of every ten feet. But such a measure would not really do the country what its proper development ought to. On the other hand, another measure, for example, one which makes available a method of using

Indian bamboo poles, instead of costly plastic or iron pipes, for being bored into the earth to draw out underground water fit for drinking, would be better agent of development because it would be affordable even by poor people. It would fulfil a great need of theirs because clean drinking water is a rare commodity to a large number of them.

A developmental measure, which contributes to the further improvement of the already high quality of life of the rich, as well as to the much needed improvement of the living conditions of the present-day poor who find it extremely difficult to manage to exist, would definitely be preferable. But it does not seem to be possible because the amount of effort and resources which it would need the country does not seem to have, therefore, the desirability of globalization should be primarily determined by the role it can play in improving the quality of life lived by disadvantaged Indians. As a developmental measure, it seems, it would proceed by first benefiting the affluent, and then some benefits may percolate to those who are below the poverty line. But it may also happen that they dry up before reaching the bottom where the poor is. In the Gandhian model, on the other hand, we have to start the development process which, first benefiting those who are at the bottom of affluence scale, and therefore it is sure to benefit the poor. It may even require the affluent to sacrifice a bit of their self-interest, or comforts. This sacrifice would be morally desirable as it would raise their moral stature in the eyes of their countrymen as well as in the eyes of foreigners interested in India. What the affluent loses in monetary terms is more than compensated by what he gains in moral terms, and in terms of a higher kind of happiness accruing to his and to others as a result of consequential social harmony.

Globalization as Multilateral Trade

Globalization can be operative in so many ways. Any country can have, if it wants to, global political relations, that is, relations with any other country in case the other is also willing to reciprocate. In academic matters, the scholars of any country can have academic contacts, through their readings and writings, with those of any other country. In matters of trade, or commerce, however, it is not possible for a trader of one country to sell his goods in another, or start a business in partnership with a trader of another country in the latter's, or his own, country, unless the governments of the two countries permit the two traders to do that. To globalize trade and commerce is in principle to opt for a policy of, what Gandhi calls, free trade.

For India to accept the policy of globalization is, therefore, to declare that, if it serves its interests, India can permit a foreign investor to invest in India his capital to run his business through his own agents, or in partnership with an Indian party, private or public. As a result of the adoption of this policy in recent years, a large variety of foreign-made goods, or goods produced in India by a foreign company in collaboration with an Indian

party, have become available in the Indian market. In such ventures only top level, well-established, multinational, foreign firms are likely to enter the Indian market. They would naturally choose to station themselves in big, metropolitan, cities in India. The positive side of such ventures is that certain goods which some Indians need or wait to have and which are not manufactured in India would become available to them. It is also possible that the quality of some goods produced by an alien company is better than the quality of their equivalents produced by an indigenous company. Even if the former are much more expensive than the latter, buyers, who can afford, are likely to prefer them, and to feel happier because they have got the goods of their liking. But such goods would generally were the needs of affluent city-dwellers. They would not touch the Indian poor, or even the not-so-poor. Another effect of it may be that the Indian industry producing goods of comparatively inferior quality fails to compete with the foreign industry using a superior technology, and consequently is forced to close down and dismiss all of its employees. It also is possible that it betters its technology and comes up with better products. Keeping in view the technological and financial resources of a multinational company, what is more likely is that only a big Indian company would manage to have material and human resources to compete with the former in making its products come up to the standards of the latter or even better than them. Therefore globalization may have some good effects by causing competition among big companies. But it is also likely to have adverse effects on village industries which are small-scale industries, and thereby to cause unemployment among village people. This would make a large number of those presently employed in rural traditional industries unemployed and therefore their lives miserable. In this respect it would go against the ethics of development. Poor villagers, whom any viable model of development ought to benefit, instead of being benefited, are likely to become poorer than they presently are.

As a result of globalization, foreign money will surely enter the Indian money market. Along with it even some new technology may also become available to Indian industrialists and enable them to produce goods for which they presently do not have the required technology. Globalization would also bring in the country some skilled and unskilled foreign workers who will carry with them their ethics, including work ethics and sex ethics. Western work ethics is likely to tone up the work ethics of Indian workers coming into contact with Western workers. But the Western sex ethics is more liberal and flexible than Indian sex ethics. The problems which may arise on that account may also become serious. Such problems are already arising because of the influx of foreign tourists in certain areas of the country frequented by the latter.

Some foreign-made goods may be better than their Indian-made equivalents, and vice versa. But many Indians have the prejudice that foreign-made goods are generally better than Indian goods. With

globalization making foreign goods easily available, this prejudice may become stronger or more widespread, and may develop in many a feeling of national inferiority complex. Nationalism is not always ethically commendable. For example, when one nation commits aggression against another, a national of the former would be ethically right when he opposes the national policy of his country and thereby becomes international. But developing a general feeling of national inferiority complex is ethically undesirable. No nation can grow and prosper if its nationals do not have national self-confidence, namely the confidence that some of their non-nationals can also produce goods, mental or material, which are as good as, or better than, those produced by some foreign national or nationals. When this confidence is eroded, the feeling of national self-respect is sure to be eroded. Behind Gandhi's emphasis on the Swadeshi spirit, there exists this idea of inculcating and nurturing the feeling of national self-confidence and of national self-respect.

There is another side of the policy of globalization or free trade, namely liberalization of exports, which has not been mentioned in the above discussion so prominently as the liberalization of imports has been. It is true that when there is free trade between India and another country, things made in India by Indians can also, in principle, enter the market of the latter, provided, of course, there is a demand for them there. But here too only big Indian companies can be benefited in this kind of commerce. Village industries, or cottage industries, would have no chance, and therefore the poor Indian labourer, or even the middle-level businessman, is likely to derive no, or very little, benefit.

GLOBALIZATION AND ACADEMICS

Maybe, not globalization, but something very near it, has been operative in India, since ages, in the field of academics. There have been no bar to importing foreign publications or to exporting Indian publications to other countries. Since long some important publishing houses have been having their branches in India, and Indian ones their agencies or collaborative partners abroad. Since the fourth or fifth decade of the previous century, initiative taken by the Government of India in founding some centres of academic excellence like IITs and IIMs, with the collaboration of Unesco or of countries such as USA, UK, Germany, or Russia, has produced very good results with no undesirable fallout. This means globalization cannot be called an unmixed evil, or something which has to have no place anywhere. Rather, it may be said that till date, as far as academics are concerned, we have not had enough of it, or as much of it as we need.

To elaborate what I mean, let me refer to an obvious fact of academic life. It is well-known to us that among intellectuals and academic institutions there exists a sizeable class of those who are disadvantaged, in the sense that because of the areas in which they specialize, or intend to specialize,

they need some books and periodicals published abroad. But on account of their very high prices when converted into Indian currency, or of their not being easily available in the Indian bookmarket, they are not able to buy them. Their academic progress is therefore very likely to be stopped, or to proceed too slowly. The obvious way, one may say, is to have a fully free trade in books. But it is not a very optimistic solution because the buyers and users of these specialized materials are very few, since the class of specialists is very small. Therefore the number of sellers of foreign publications coming forward would be very small. To get out of this difficult situation, the best way seems to be to do something on the pattern of the founding of IITs; that is, the Government of India, or some private agency or agencies, should come forward to found, with the collaboration of some foreign partner or partners, some central libraries, say one or two in each of the regions of India, eastern, southern and central, conveniently located and properly manned, procuring foreign publications in a need-based manner and making them available to intellectuals attached or non-attached, to any academic institution. Just one national library cannot do the job. It would also be worthwhile to persuade some well-known publishing houses from abroad to have their branches in India to make available low-priced Indian editions or prints of materials published abroad. It would not be unjustified to give to such firms some concessions, like allotting a suitable building on reduced rent, or even permitting them to start a little more lucrative business in some other area which may compensate for their loss, or lack of profit, if any, in the publication business.

Such steps, some may think, would benefit only a small percentage of the Indian population. But that would only be an apparent truth. By benefiting the individuals engaged in the pursuit of higher knowledge, by improving their equipment, it would improve the equipment of students and young scholars who are taught by them, or read their writings. Therefore ultimately it would tone up the caliber of all those who go in for higher education, provided they are willing and motivated to better their abilities.

It would be wrong even to say that all this would not be of much assistance in toning up the prevailing systems of primary and secondary education. School education in some countries, for example, the USA and UK, is the bedrock of their excellence in higher education, and so should be the case in India. The Indian system of school education can definitely profit by some components of methodology followed by the schools in the USA and UK. This is not to say that we borrow their methodology lock, stock, and barrel, but only that the Indian methodology may be segmented with some of the relevant and usable features of their methodology. What I am suggesting is that collaboration with some other countries may be used to tone up not only our higher education and research but also our school education. Most of Indian intellectuals, I think, do believe that that

standards of education in some foreign countries are higher than ours though they may not say it publicly. It is not difficult to locate an Indian scholar who has been abroad for getting a degree equivalent to, or even of a lower rank than, the one he already had from a prestigious Indian university. This practice is not in every case a thoughtless venture because, more often than not, his working for the degree abroad improves a great deal of his intellectual caliber and equipment.

There seems to be a suspicion in some minds that globalization in trade, and more surely in education, would bring into the country not only some alien men and materials but also some cultural ideas which may affect Indian culture in an adverse manner. This suspicion is unfounded because even without globalization alien cultural ideas are entering the Indian lifestyle. It is almost impossible to keep Indian culture or cultures isolated. Moreover, it is vane to preserve the identity of Indian culture by keeping it isolated from world cultures. If Indian culture has inner strength, Gandhi would have said, contacts with other cultures will not weaken it; rather, the latter may make it shine brighter.

PLACING THE GANDHIAN AND GLOBALIZATION MODELS FACE TO FACE

Neither the Gandhian, nor the globalization, model raises any problem for ethical theory. Each one of them can be assessed, depending on the specificity of the context, in deontological, teleological, or virtue-theoretic terms, though generally theorists prefer to judge a development scheme in teleological, more specifically, utilitarian, terms. But the models do raise some problems for the *ethics* of development, that is, some practical, ethical, problems. This is clear from what has been said in earlier. It has been shown therein that the Gandhian model is more suited to ameliorating the conditions of the Indian poor, rural or urban, whereas the globalization model is more likely to benefit the urban, maybe even the rural, affluent. This is an ethical, or moral, difference between the two because it is more ethical to do the former than to do the latter, and therefore the Gandhian model is ethically superior to the globalization model.

Since globalization may largely benefit the urban affluent and only marginally the rural or urban poor, we cannot say that it is all evil. But we can say that it is not likely to do what needs to be urgently done, namely the amelioration of the conditions of the poor. But, if the liberalization which goes with globalization motivates a foreign investor to enter the Indian market by starting a big industry in an area and also to have a side-by-side operation which benefits the local poor a great deal, I do not think there should be any serious objection to his doing both. But still the Gandhian model is better because it aims at developing a village in a manner which retains and strengthens those components of the village ethos which deserve to be retained and strengthened. It is something like trying to cure a sick man's ailment by giving him to eat out of the edibles in

his own kitchen those which not only have curative properties but are also pleasing to his palate.

Notwithstanding his great respect for the classical Indian ideal of acquiring happiness by having no attachment for the consequences of one's actions, Gandhi does not plead for the poor man's cultivating this attitude, nor does he admonish him to curtail his desires, or to exercise self-control. This he does not, because he realizes—and more truly than most of his contemporaries or cohorts did—that their desires are already too modest. The breathing idea behind his advice or suggestion to Indians, via his proposal for developing village industries to such an extent that they become capable of producing all, or almost all, of the goods required to satisfy all or almost all of the basic needs or desires of villagers, is that this method or mode of satisfying their needs (by the goods they themselves produce) would arouse in them their sense of self-respect and self-confidence, and thereby make their resultant happiness much superior to that which they may have by buying goods made by some foreign countries or concerns. Gandhi's ideal was people's happiness, a mental state, achievable through the instrumentation of self-activity or, putting it materialistically, indigenous production. This state is not quantifiable but is clear and precise enough for being made the goal of a development strategy. It is, therefore, not identical with the modern economist's notion of welfare which consists very largely in material consumption. That is, when the availability of goods increases and with it increases material consumption, that is, the consumption of the goods, a modern economist would say, welfare increases. Quite obviously, welfare, in this understanding of it, would be a measurable concept and therefore more congenial for modern, or mathematical, economists.

Whichever way one thinks fit to characterize it, Gandhi's economics, or economic development, is by and large qualitative. It is morality-centric because its goal is the realization of people's satisfaction or happiness, but not any kind of satisfaction or happiness. Using a modern ethical terminology, it is informed, that is, rationally justifiable, satisfaction or happiness which they can attain only after having gotten rid of their prejudices, biases, superstitions, wrong beliefs, etc., that is, after having been properly informed of the right kind of things they ought to desire and to have. Making them properly informed was the main objective, or one of the main objectives, of his constructive programme, since an important component of it was the constructive criticism of social evils accompanied with the dissemination of a healthy and coherence-promoting social ethics.

The apparent snag in the Gandhian model is the impossible looking task of impressing upon a big landlord, or a factory owner, to behave in the manner of a trustee of people's property and not in that of its master, as he does even now, more than half a century after India's becoming politically independent. If this problem can be solved by adopting some governmental, legislative, social or political, measures to stop exploitation of the poor

workers, rural or urban, the Gandhian model would be decidedly the best. It would not only have no undesirable ethical fallout, but will be very greatly primitive of the sentiments of national self-respect and national self-confidence which are likely to be weakened in some by the adoption of the globalization model.

The idea of trusteeship, among Gandhian ideas of social reconstruction, is the idea which has been or, one of those ideas which have been, considered to be impracticable. But it is also true that in his theory of social reconstruction the two building-blocks of which are nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and truth (*satya*), practicalizing this idea could be the only logical way to stop capitalistic exploitation of labour. Gandhi had in his mind a picture of the way in which the political worker, the elected representative, that is, the political ruler, would or should, function in independent India. That his style of life would be very simple and imbued with his commitment to the primacy of the ethical—to the commitment to preferring an ethical consideration to any non-ethical or unethical consideration—was, according to him, the *sin qua non* for a healthy political practice or for one participating in it. To emphasize this aspect of a worthwhile political practice he did not hesitate whenever there was an occasion to. But the political practice in post-Independence India took a different, or rather an opposite, turn. Elections became highly expensive. Aspiring politicians and political parties started collecting funds, and large amounts of money could come only from rich capitalists. A capitalist who donates huge amounts would naturally try to compensate for the donation made through his profits in howsoever unfair a manner possible. And since he has obliged a political individual or a party, he would naturally expect and also get their support if he is in trouble on account of having indulged in any unfair but highly profit-yielding deal.

Taking profit is not ethically undesirable. A businessman has the right to make profit, but he has to keep his profit making endeavour within the bounds of morality. He would do that marvellously well if he treats himself as the trustee of the property from the use of which he earns his profit. Gandhi had the moral right to say to a capitalist that he should do that because he himself always kept his personal or public operations well within the bounds of morality. But a post-Independence politician lost his right to do that because of his practice of collecting money from the rich to be elected and thereby to be in power. Therefore a trend of thought set in to the effect that the very idea of trusteeship itself was unpracticalizable. But the fact of the matter is that such political individuals, or parties, did not come up who had the moral right to persuade, or even tell, a capitalist to behave like a Gandhian trustee. A businessman can be expected or required to earn his profit only in a morally desirable manner, and not to exploit those who work for him and by their work enable him to earn the profit, only if he himself is not exploited by anyone, any politician, or political party, in being pressed to make heavy donations to their political funds.

Heavy donations to political funds can be made only by big industrialists, or landowners, and not by owners of small village industries for which Gandhi pleaded. This is also another reason why village industries were not and are not developed to the extent to which Gandhi wanted. Even globalization, going in for multinational trade, is in the same direction of encouraging the accumulation of wealth in the hands of a few individuals, or groups of individuals. All this may eventually happen, in spite of some opposition to it. But the axiom of the Gandhian model of development—to develop India while preserving its ethics-cultural identity is to develop its villages—and its ethical soundness is as valid today as, if not more than, they were in pre-Independence India.

Notes and References

1. M.K. Gandhi, *India of My Dreams* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1947), p. 124.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 91.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 104.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 97-98.

Religion of Mahatma Gandhi

Ranjit Chaudhuri

THOUGH THE MEANING of religion in the Hindu concept of Dharma is not without complexities, Gandhi tried to make it broad enough to lend it a universal character. His idea of religion was not totally esoteric. He knew that every religion was connected with some belief system supported by rituals. He tried to get rid of the rituals as far as possible. To Gandhi religion was a human institution made by human ingenuity to solve practical affairs as well as spiritual matters. His oft-quoted passages can be cited. He said: "By religion, I do not mean formal religion, or customary religion, but that religion which underlies all religions, which brings us face to face with our Maker."¹ "It is the permanent element in human nature which counts no cost too great in order to find full expression and which leaves the soul utterly restless until it has found itself. . . ."² Again, he observed: "Religion which takes no account of practical affairs and does not help to solve them, is no religion."³ He did not define religion in exact and definitive language. One of his attempts was to bring religion closer to common man. In that regard his religion was functional. But most of the times Gandhi felt that religion could not be understood without knowing its relation with God. According to him, "belief in one God is the cornerstone of all religions."⁴ He was also fully aware that there were religions which doctrinally did not believe in God. But Gandhi has an unshaken faith in God. He declared: "... I may live without air and water but not without Him."⁵

God is conceived by him in several ways. He preferred to use the maxim "Truth is God." He thought Truth was a widely accepted connotation. He also described God as Power, Spirit, Life, Light, and Love, and in several other ways. He also saw Him as Supreme Good. God is realized and experienced by an individual. Realization of God cannot be shared. In that sense it is esoteric. When religion leads to knowing God, it tends to become personal. That was why Gandhi said "religion is a very

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personal matter."⁶ As a personal matter, religion moulds one's life; for, religion is the embodiment of ethics. He said: "You must watch my life, how I live, eat, sit, talk, behave in general. The sum-total of those in me is my religion."⁷ In reply to Dr Radhakrishnan's three questions, namely (i) what is your religion?, (ii) how are you led to it?, and (iii) what is its bearing on social life?, Gandhi replied:

My religion is Hinduism which, for me, is the religion of humanity and includes the best of all the religions known to me.

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I am being led to my religion through Truth and nonviolence, i.e., love in the broadest sense. I often describe my religion as religion of Truth.

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Realization of Truth is impossible without a complete merging of oneself in and identification with this limitless ocean of life. Hence, for me, there is no escape from social service, there is no happiness on earth beyond or apart from it.⁸

This was the broad view of what Gandhi thought about religion.

IF WE TRY to understand it in a deeper way, it will appear that Gandhi had an anthropocentric view of religion. To him all customary religions were made by human beings. Human beings are imperfect. Made by imperfect human beings, no religion can have divine origin. Gandhi wrote: "Religion of our conception, being imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and reinterpretation."⁹ He also declared: "I could not live for a single second without religion."¹⁰ His religion was a means to the realization of God. He could not live without God, nor could he live without religion. Religion and God both were indispensable for him. Here some confusion may crop up. Religion is a human institution and is subject to a process of evolution. The concept of God cannot change. Both cannot have the same importance.

Actually Gandhi was wavering between ideal religion and institutional religion. When he said that religion transcended all formal religions, he was talking of an ideal religion. He could not define it. He felt that formal religions have shortcomings. At the same time he realized that "... every activity of man of religion must be derived from his religion, because religion means being bound to God, that is to say, God rules your every breath."¹¹ True religion is compared with a trunk of a tree, and the formal religions with its many branches. His oscillation between ideal religion and customary religions was real. According to him, there was one true and perfect religion, though it existed only conceptually.

When a human being is born, he or she is born in a religion. One has very little scope for a conscious choice of religion. Gandhi was born in an orthodox Hindu family. His family was a follower of Vaishnavism

advocated by Vallabhacharya, a Telugu Brahmin born in 1479. Gandhi's mother's family belonged to the *Pranami* sect. It is an eclectic faith propagated by a Gujarati saint Mahamati Prannath who lived during the period 1618 to 1694. It showed equal respect to Hindu and Muslim faiths. *Pranami* temples had no images. In his childhood days, Gandhi used to visit temples. But he did not develop a liking for idol worship. He, of course, later justified idol worship as a necessary symbol. He always used to call himself a Sanatani Hindu. Though his aspiration was for ideal religion, Hinduism was almost indispensable for his life. He confessed: "If Hinduism had not come to my rescue, the course for me would have been suicide. I remain a Hindu because Hinduism is a leaven which makes the world worth living in."¹² His faith in Hinduism is more than a faith in a formal religion. He asserted: "Not being exclusive religion, it enables the followers of that faith not merely to respect all the other religions, but it also enables them to admire and assimilate whatever may be good in other faiths."¹³ Hinduism came closer to his ideal. Gandhi said that Hinduism believed in "oneness" and "sacredness" of all life. It is free from dogma, and is the most tolerant religion. Above everything, Hindu civilization is maintaining its continuity.

He developed his confidence in Hinduism gradually. Before his South African days Gandhi had some hesitations about Hinduism. His interest in Hinduism, he said, grew by reading Blavatsky's *Key to Theosophy*. He even had contacts with the atheist Bradlaugh. His early attraction for Theosophical Society cannot be ignored. At this point Raichandbhai's guidance was important for him. Raichandbhai was not a Hindu in the orthodox sense. But he helped Gandhi in dispelling many doubts about religious matters. At the same time, the emergence of Vivekananda who brought new glory to Hindu religion by focusing its universalism from the days of Parliament of Religion of 1893, the year Gandhi went to South Africa, had a salutary effect. The revival and resurgence of Hindu religion took place under Vivekananda's leadership. It cannot be conceived that Gandhi was out of his influence.

In South Africa Gandhi got a new life—not only political but religious and spiritual. When he arrived in South Africa, his religious roots were not strong enough. His knowledge about his own religion was superficial. His ideas about other religions were no better. Politically he had to encounter a multi-ethnic situation. His interactions took place with the Muslim and Parsi merchants, indentured labour of both Hindu and Muslim communities representing different linguistic groups. Gradually he gathered many Christian and Jew friends. This exposure to heterogeneous groups of people encouraged him to know about different religions. At the same time, the quest for identity and roots rendered a new meaning to the existence of the Indians. Rev. J.J. Doke, the first biographer of Gandhi, tried to explain the Gandhian struggle and Indian movement in that context. He observed:

In reality it is not a trade dispute, nor is it a political move; these are incidents of the struggle. It is a sign of awakening of the Asiatics to a sense of their manhood, the token that they do not mean to play a servile or degraded part in our society; it is their claim, put forward in suffering, to be treated by Christians in a Christian way. This is the wonderful vision which Government and Churches alike have failed to see.¹⁴

The gradual unfoldment of Gandhi's identity took place in the collective entity of Indians. It gradually transformed into the harmony and integrity of all human beings. He commented: "Both my continence and nonviolence were derived from personal experience and became necessary in response to the calls of public duty."¹⁵ His South African days moulded his entire life, his politics, and his religion.

In South Africa, the Theosophical Society invited Gandhi in 1905 to speak on Hinduism. In this lecture of Gandhi's Hindus were identified with Indians. He said: "I am to speak to you no doubt about the Hindus; but the ways and manners of the Hindus and other Indians were all but identical."¹⁶ Analytically this was not true. Gandhi was aware of it. But Gandhi developed a vision of India being a harmonious society. He was under the stress of objective political reality. In this speech he showed a weak conviction about Hinduism. He was rather apologetic when he mentioned, "Hindus or the Indians . . . cannot be altogether an inferior people. . . ."¹⁷ His boldness about his faith in Hinduism was missing here. In South Africa Gandhi's public life taught him not to make any distinction between Hindus and other religious groups. At this time, it appeared that Gandhi gave more importance to Indian identity than to Hindu identity. The Hindu identity merged with the Indian identity.

This was apparently necessary in order to maintain communal harmony. The communal problem was not totally absent among the Indians in South Africa. But it remained within manageable limits. From this time on, Gandhi became more Indian than Hindu and flexible and accommodative of other religious views. Doke, who was a sincere Christian, discovered that "His [Gandhi's] views are too closely allied to Christianity to be entirely Hindu; and too deeply saturated with Hinduism to be called Christian, while his sympathies are so wide and catholic that one would imagine he has reached a point where the formulae of sects are meaningless."¹⁸ With the Muslims the problem remained complicated. In his *Autobiography* Gandhi mentions: "But my South African experiences had convinced me that it would be on the question of Hindu-Muslim unity that my Ahimsa would be put to its severest test, and that the question presented the widest field for my experiments in Ahimsa."¹⁹ It may be mentioned here that in 1906 the Muslim League was formed in India when in the same year Gandhi started his Satyagraha in South Africa with the joint effort of Hindus and Muslims. Throughout his life the question of Hindu-Muslim unity remained supreme. Gandhi was confident about his role in this regard. He declared: "If not during my lifetime, I know that

after my death both Hindus and Mussalmans will bear witness that I had never ceased to yearn after communal peace."²⁰

Gandhi realized that it was through the proper understanding of religion that one could deal with the question of communal problem. Gandhi thought that by knowing the essence of a particular religion one can discover the essence of other religions. All religions lead to one goal. To Gandhi there was a close connection between religion and spirituality. For Gandhi, the relationship between the two was impeccable. But the meaning of spirituality is not very clear. We can try to find clarity of the meaning of spirituality by dealing it in the sense of "pertaining to *Moksha*" and "pertaining to God" and in the Upanishadic sense of "pertaining to Self." Gandhi's spiritualism was fused in all the three senses.

In his talk at the Theosophical Society in 1905 Gandhi said: "The main thing that distinguishes the Hindus is their belief that the *Brahman* or oversoul is all-pervading. What we all have to attain is *Moksha* or liberation, *Moksha* here meaning freeing oneself from the evil of birth and death and merging in the *Brahman*."²¹ At that time his study of religion and spiritualism was not very deep. The influence of *Gita* on him was known. It was his just entry into spiritualism. In a letter in 1921 he said that a person who restrained the senses was said to have attained self-control and who transcended self-control was said to have attained *Moksha*.²² For that, intense *tapascharya* is required. *Moksha* is the emancipation from phenomenal existence when end of life comes without its return. To Gandhi Truth is God. *Taittiriya Upanishad* puts *Satyamjnananamanantam Brahma*, meaning, Truth is *Brahma*, Knowledge is *Brahma* and Infinite is *Brahma*. Truth also leads to *Moksha*. The early part of his life was occupied by the thought of *Moksha*. In a letter he wrote "... my aspiration of *Moksha* was by no means weak then—but the fact is that I am no more than an aspirant after *Moksha*. But I am not yet fit for *Moksha* in this life."²³ His search for spiritual life began with a search for *Moksha*.

In his entire life, Gandhi's spiritual quest never stopped. It is obvious that he was not rigid about the conception of God. He did not think about God as a person. He made clear on a number of occasions that his *Rama* was not a historic figure. "*Rama, Krishna* etc., are called incarnations of God because we attribute divine qualities to them. In truth they are creations of man's imagination."²⁴ But many a time he found no reason to object to look upon God as person. He observed: "He is a personal God to those who need his personal presence. He is embodied to those who need His touch. He is the purest essence. He simply is to those who have faith. He is all things to all men."²⁵ He again said: "... what matters then whether one worships God as a person and another a force. Both do right according to their own lights."²⁶

One must understand that search for Truth is a search for God. According to Gandhi, Truth precedes existence. Truth is God. God is, therefore, we are. Reality of God is more certain because existence follows

from God. Gandhi thought: "We embark upon the search, because we believe that there is Truth and that it can be found by diligent search and meticulous observance of well-known and well-tried rules of search."²⁷ The question is how do we look at the essence of Truth. Generally Truth is taken as in-itself. It appears in the consciousness of the individual. This consciousness is temporal consciousness. There is a transcendental consciousness which appears in the Higher Self where individual Self merges into transcendental Self. *Brihadaranyak Upanishad* says that the universe comes out of the existence of Self. During the conversation between *Maitreyi* and *Yajnavalkya*, the latter said all the activities were directed towards the fulfilment of the Self. There is an inseparable relation between Self and cosmos. Gandhi also came to the same realization, namely that from self-knowledge one could know the Universe. This self-knowledge needs *Sādharma*, a ceaseless striving through the purity of heart which again depends on the practice of *yamas* and *niyamas*—the cardinal and casual virtues.²⁸ *Yamas*, the cardinal virtues are Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, and Aparigraha. The *Niyamas*, the casual virtues are—Saucha, Santosha, Tapa, Swadhyaya, and Ishwarapranidhana.

In the process of his own becoming, Gandhi developed a deep introspection about the aim of life. He felt: "It is to know Self-realization in the Self or Self-knowledge, is not possible until one has achieved unity with all living beings—has become one with God."²⁹ One is manifested in many. But *Brahman* is one. Upanishad says *sa ekah*.³⁰ Self is everywhere—*Sarvavyapinam atmanam*.³¹ In the Hindu metaphysical sense the question arises whether *ātman* is different from *Brahman*. Gandhi answered it by an analogy. He said: "The ocean is composed of drops of water; each drop is an entity and yet it is a part of the whole; 'the one and the many.'" In this ocean of Life, we are little drops. My doctrine means that I must identify myself with life, that I must share the majesty of life in the presence of God. The sum-total of this life is God."³² In the process of becoming of the Self the relations between one individual and another, and also between the individual and Cosmos determine the ontological position. The meaningful consciousness comes out of this process.

HIS ACCEPTANCE OF the doctrine of the *Gita* explains his spiritual position. Gandhi's religious life was mostly influenced by the *Gita*. He did not have interest in constructing philosophical and metaphysical abstractions for academic interest. Teachings of *Gita* touched his heart. He also felt that it had a popular appeal. His reading and interpretation of the *Gita* was meticulously thorough and sincere. In his interpretation he combined Sankhya philosophy with Vedanta philosophy. He believed in the doctrine of *Karma*. A person's becoming depends upon his or her *Karma*. Self is reflected in every action. The result of the action is beyond our reach. The fruit of the action should be left to the Unknown. Knowledge teaches us to

be non-attached about the result of action. The existence and the rules of conduct in existence gradually take us to the knowledge of *anāsakti*. Human beings aspire for right knowledge. Right knowledge arises when the human being is at peace with self. This is a state of *sthitaprajna*. This is the supreme self-realization.

Though he was an *advaitist*, he found it difficult to remain always an ardent follower of *advaitism*. In his metaphysical discipline he tried to combine *dvaitism* and *advaitism*. With little hesitation he said: "I am an *advaitist* and yet I can support *dvaitism* (dualism)."³³ As an *advaitist* he believed that God was the only truth. He wrote: "God alone is and nothing else exists."³⁴ To an *advaitist* God is the only true reality and not his creation. But in practice Gandhi could not ignore the creation. To Gandhi God becomes supreme reality as He appears in his creation. So both God and universe are real. Both *ātman* and *Brahman* are real and they exist separately. Finally, the two become one. They are one and yet they are separate. In that sense he is both an *advaitist* and a *dvaitist*. He tried to combine *dvaita* and *advaita* together which is known as *Dvaitadvaitavad*.

Gandhi sometimes expressed ideas which emanated from the *advaita* doctrine, and some times preferred ideas which refuted *advaitavad*. Once he said: "A drop in the ocean partakes of the greatness of its parent, although it is unconscious of it. But it is dried up as soon as it enters upon an existence independent of the ocean. We do not exaggerate, when we say that life is a mere bubble."³⁵ It is pure Sankara doctrine. To Sankaracharya life was illusion. In fact, traditionally Gandhi did not belong to this school of thought. The *advaita* tradition of Gandhi came from Vallabhacharya whose follower his family was. Vallabhacharya developed a thought that is known as *suddhadvaitavad* or pure non-dualism. Vallabhacharya derived his ideas from the *Vishishtadvaitavad* of Ramanuja and adopted necessary changes to fit in his philosophy. In the introduction of *Gita*, translated by Radhakrishnan, he remarked that Ramanuja refuted the doctrine of unreality of the world and the path of renunciation. Ramanuja thought that before creation took place the world was in a potential form. In creation, it is developed into name and form (*namarupa*). The ego (*jiva*) is not unreal and is not extinguished in the state of liberation. The Upanishad passage, *tat tvam asi* (that art thou) means "that God is myself." Even my soul is the self of my body. In the same spirit Gandhi said: "The only way to find God is to see Him in his creation."³⁶ He quoted Blavatsky even to say that "man, in praying, worships his glorified Self."³⁷ This is a refutation of the contention that life is a passing illusion.

In the light of *anekantavad* and *syadvad* of Jainism, Gandhi attempted to explain the changing world. *Anekantavad* signified many points of view, each viewpoint yields a different conclusion. *Syadvad* generally means the doctrine of "maybe." There are infinite attributes of each object (*vastu*). Only some of them come to knowledge of a person at a particular time. So a person can comprehend only relative truth, not absolute truth. We must

respect and value other opinions because we cannot know all the truth at a time. That is the foundation of the nonviolence of Jainism. But Gandhi used *anekantavād* and *syādvād* not strictly according to the Jain concept. He was fully aware of the plural truth of knowledge.

For Gandhi the purpose of life is to move Godwardly. In the process of becoming Godward, movement is very important. In that process the human being intends to surrender to God completely. *Gīta* taught Gandhi that Godward individual enters into a relation with God in the spirit of total effacement. It was one of subjugation of a slave to the master. This reveals that *Vaishnavism* of his family tradition became prominent here. A real Vaishnav fully surrenders to God. Gandhi announced: "The relation between God and myself is not only at prayer but all times that of master and slave."³⁸ It is a way to express one's love for God. Gandhi admitted that "true love was self-effacing and demands no consideration."³⁹ Love in Hindu spiritualism means *Prem*. It also means *Bhakti*. In *Vaishnavism* there are different forms of *prem* such as, *vatsalya prem*, *sakhya prem*, *dasya prem* etc. Gandhi preferred to express his *prem* for God often in the form of *dasya prem*. Similarly *dasya prem* is found prominent in the mystic saint Mirabai. One has to acquire the power to surrender. Gandhi opined: "It is an unbroken torture to me that I am still so far from Him, who, as I fully know, governs every breath of my life, and whose offspring I am."⁴⁰ When Gandhi thought himself as God's offspring, he made a covered reference to God as an embodied existence. The torture or suffering mentioned by Gandhi was the *klesha* in the *Vaishnava* sense of the term. But one must also note that *klesha* and torture or suffering do not carry identical meanings.

Vaishnava klesha and Christian suffering were combined together to apply to the practice of nonviolence by Gandhi. The application was more or less systematic. He admitted: "The quest of Truth required continuous *Tapascharya*, self-suffering."⁴¹ "Nonviolence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering."⁴² This being the essential meaning of nonviolence, Gandhi consciously accepted suffering as a form of love. James W. Douglas observes: "The significance of Gandhi . . . is that Gandhi concentrated his entire life and being on the Christic reality of suffering love."⁴³ Douglas quoted Gandhi as saying, "Though I cannot claim to be Christian in the sectarian sense, the example of Jesus' suffering is a factor in the composition of my undying faith in nonviolence which rules all my actions. . . ."⁴⁴ There is some truth in Douglas' claim that Gandhi's faith in nonviolence was Christocentric.

But there are some differences between the sufferings of Jesus on the one hand and Gandhi's sufferings on the other. Gandhi's sufferings were goal-oriented and intentional, whereas the sufferings of Jesus were involuntary. In the sufferings of Jesus there was no purposive content. To Gandhi self-sufferings were to achieve power to resist. Gandhi's sufferings were not self-denial, he was positively self-assertive. This is also a point of

difference between Gandhi and Jainism. Gandhi applied ahimsa in a situation where self-affirmation was more real than self-abnegation.

His self-affirmation came from his inner voice. The justification of his action arose from intrinsic morality. At the level of public action his attitude was formed by deep introspection which was identified by inner voice. His Truth, many a time, is a self-revealing Truth. Strength to suffer for the sake of Truth came from inner voice. Gandhi affirmed. "I have never felt that whatever knowledge has been gained was imposed from without but it has come from within."⁴⁵ He had confidence in the inner self. His mode of becoming had a deep correspondence with the inner self. Inner self had an intimate relation with purity of mind. When mind is pure, one can hear the inner voice. Gandhi said: "For me the Voice of God, of Conscience, of Truth, or Inner voice or 'the Still Small Voice' mean one and the same thing."⁴⁶ This was his mystic experience. Mysticism becomes deeper when Gandhi felt that "it was as unmistakable as some human voice definitely speaking to me, and irresistible."⁴⁷ Gandhi found an infinite mystery in human voice.

It was not unusual that Gandhi remained undogmatic about religion. It was difficult for him to accept that religion like Buddhism and Jainism did not believe in the existence of God. Gandhi knew that although these religions did not use the word "God," they believed in some permanent virtues. Regarding Buddha he commented: "He unhesitatingly said that the Law was God Himself. God's laws are eternal and unalterable and not separate from God Himself. It is an indispensable condition of his very perfection. And hence, the great confusion that Buddha disbelieved in God and simply believed in the moral law."⁴⁸ According to Buddha, Law is Dharma. To Gandhi, Law is not separate from God. Law and Law-maker are one. The universe is the law-governing universe. Buddhist Universe is constantly changing. Even in change it is governed by normative law. The operative pattern of normative action becomes the basis of religion. Christianity considers God as more than the moral law. For Gandhi, it is not at all difficult to accept the Law and the Law-maker as one. In Buddhism existence in-itself is real. Creation is real. Gandhi saw meaning of God in his creation. His God is not outside his creation. It can be admitted that existence recedes essence, but essence sustains existence. Without essence, existence becomes meaningless.

Gandhi tried to give expression to essence through Satyagraha and action, whereas Buddha tried through *karuna* or compassion. Gandhi realized that ahimsa without love could not be true ahimsa. He felt that true morality could be maintained only through non-distinction between public and private life. This is also a Buddhist virtue.

Intellectually Gandhi was not a system-builder. He took important things from different sources not for constructing a system but to know the Truth. This is the strength as well as weakness of Gandhi. Gandhi could have been consistent if he wanted to be. There is a design in his inconsistency.

To him consistency is neither a virtue nor a vice. Life is the most important thing. It has various demands. To a man of action life is more important than anything else. That was why Gandhi took *Gita* as the mother. As Radhakrishnan said: "The teaching of the *Gita* is not presented as a metaphysical system thought out by an individual thinker or school of thinkers. It is set forth as a tradition which has emerged from the religious life of mankind."⁴⁹

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The Idea of Justice in Gandhi's Socio-Political Thought

Nilanjana Jain

MAHATMA GANDHI WAS not a political thinker or a philosopher in the accepted sense of the term. He was rather a political leader dedicated to the mission of freeing India from the British rule. His ideas on social and political issues developed during the course of his struggle for independence. He wrote constantly and on every subject. His writings have now been published and they fill in one hundred volumes.

Gandhi did not address the question of justice as such. There is no discussion in his writings on the concept or the theory of justice independently. Even then justice permeated all his ideas and is the running thread in his entire thought system.

Gandhi attached the highest value to the twin concepts of truth and nonviolence. He equated God with Truth and vice versa. The ideal state of his conception must rest on truth and nonviolence. His own life was the "Story of My Experiments with Truth." In fact and in substance, truth is to Gandhi, what justice is to Plato, Truth is the equivalent of justice, to Gandhi. He records in the introduction to his Autobiography—"... for me truth is the sovereign principle, which includes numerous other principles. This truth is not only truthfulness in word, but truthfulness in thought also, and not only the relative truth of our conception, but the absolute truth, the eternal principle, that is God."¹

In the *Harijan*, Gandhi wrote: "... truth is God. This is a living force. Our life is of the force. That force resides in, but is not the body. ..."

To Gandhi, pursuit of truth by nonviolent means is Satyagraha and Satyagraha can rid society of all evils, political, economic and moral.²

Truth was the dictate of right reason. It was the voice of enlightened consciousness which is guided by love and reason and understands the nature and meaning of the good.³

Truth was therefore righteous conduct, or righteousness. The pursuit of truth was the pursuit of righteousness.

Satyagraha was the means and mode of establishing truth by nonviolent means, truth as perceived by enlightened conscience. Gandhi defined Satyagraha as the soul force in action. It was the technique of change, technique of revolution in all spheres of life—political, social, economic.

Truth was to him the goal of all human endeavour, be it political, social, economic, or religious. "To find truth completely is to realize oneself and one's destiny, in other words, to become perfect," said Gandhi. To him political freedom, social equality, and economic justice were the pre-conditions and forms of expression of the truth.

Ramrajya

Gandhi saw his vision of truth embodied in the conception of *Ramrajya*. Lord Rama stood for justice and truth. He symbolised duty and virtue, Gandhi described *Ramrajya* as "sovereignty of the people based on pure moral authority."⁴

Writing in 1946 Gandhi said: "Independence of my dream means *Ramrajya*, that is, the kingdom of God on Earth. . . . In concrete terms independence should be political, economic, and moral."⁵

The *Ramrajya* will be characterised by the understanding of one's duty and the observance thereof.⁶

Swaraj

Mahatma Gandhi defined *Swaraj* as self-rule or rule over self. It means the supremacy of reason over appetite. The individual is free only to the extent he is governed by reason or by his rational self.

Gandhi attaches the highest value to individual liberty. It is individual freedom which makes a man voluntarily surrender himself completely to the service of society. Gandhi wrote: "No society can possibly be built on a denial of individual freedom. It is contrary to the very nature of man . . . he will not exist as man if he has no mind of his own. . . ."⁷

These philosophical notions of truth and nonviolence, *Swaraj* and *Ramrajya* provide the premise of the just, social, economic, and political order which Gandhi outlines in his extensive writings and speeches. It is this order in which can be seen Gandhi's conception of justice.

Political Justice

Gandhi's views on national liberation, individual liberty, democracy, decentralisation, and panchayati raj show his grasp of the conception of political justice, and his concern for it. The reach for justice is the running thread through all of his political ideas.

National Liberation

Gandhi was dedicated to the attainment of *Swaraj*. But *Swaraj* for him did

not merely signify replacement of the foreign rule by Home Rule. It was much more than that. He wrote in the *Hind Swaraj* (1909): "We do not want the tyranny of either English rule, or Indian rule."⁸ He was emphatic that Swaraj did not mean "English rule without the Englishmen."⁹ He wrote: "I am not interested in freeing India from the English yoke. I am bent upon freeing India from any yoke whatsoever."¹⁰

The Swaraj of his dream was the poor man's Swaraj in which the common man will be guaranteed all necessities of life, in which everyone will have freedom of religion, faith, and worship, in which the landlord and the capitalist will cease to exploit the tenant and the labour. "Justice and equity," wrote Gandhi, "mean the establishment of just and equitable relations between capital and labour, between the landlord and the tenant."¹¹ Swaraj or Ramrajya symbolises justice and equity.

Independence should be political, economic, and moral. Political independence implied withdrawal of the British rule from India. Economic independence means freedom from capitalists, both British and Indian, so that "the humblest feels equal to the tallest." Moral independence means freedom from armed defence forces.

Gandhi did not elaborate how a country could afford to dispense with the national army. He insisted on nonviolent resistance to armed attack but he was not consistent, nor convincing, on this point.

Individual Freedom

Gandhi's doctrine of Truth assumes that each individual is sovereign over himself, judge of what is wrong and right. In fact, he defined home rule or self-rule as rule over self or self-control.

Satyagraha was the highest manifestation of individual moral freedom. He was opposed to the state because it was based on force¹² and suppressed individuality. His final goal was the attainment of a stateless society where every individual will be governed by his own individual moral self.

Gandhi was, however, conscious that the ideal could never be realised and so the practical thing was to harmonise individual liberty with social interest.

Gandhi admits: "Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have to learn to strike the mean between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society enriches both the individual and the society of which he is a member."¹³

Democracy

Gandhi admits that so long as the ideal of the self-governing individual in a stateless society is not realised, man must be governed by majority decisions. The state's functions should be reduced to the minimum and the government must rest on the consent of the governed. It should be periodically elected by the entire adult population, male, and female.

Gandhi attached one qualification to franchise. He says that the qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work. The right to vote should be given only to those who "have contributed by manual labour to the service of the state. . . ." ¹⁴

The picture of a free India as drawn by Jayaprakash Narayan and endorsed by Gandhi contained the following propositions: "The law of the land will be based on the will of the people freely expressed by them. The ultimate basis of maintenance of order shall be the sanction and concurrence of the people."

The free Indian state shall guarantee full individual and civil liberty and cultural and religious freedom.

The state shall not discriminate in any manner between citizens of the nation. "Every citizen shall be guaranteed equal rights. All distinctions of birth and privilege shall be abolished. . . . The political and economic organization of the state shall be based on principles of social justice and economic freedom. . . ." ¹⁵

With all his abhorrence of the British Parliament, ¹⁶ Gandhi agreed that there was actually no viable alternative to representative democracy and majority rule. These offered the maximum assurance of freedom of the individual and his moral development.

Gandhi, like John Stuart Mill, admits that the majority decision could sometimes be wrong and unjust. Gandhi offers passive resistance and Satyagraha as the moral weapons in the hands of the individual and groups of individuals to counter what Mill called the "tyranny of the majority." These techniques were developed in opposing racial discrimination in South Africa and later employed in the struggle for freedom in India. These included fasts, *hartal*, rallies, boycott, disobedience of laws, protest marches, demonstrations, defiance of prohibitory orders, etc.

The resistance to law and authority has to be peaceful, nonviolent, and in public interest, in all circumstances.

That Gandhi concedes the propriety of passive resistance to the decisions of a popularly elected constitutional government is the high-water mark of his trust in individual freedom, which it is hard to defend. ¹⁷

Decentralisation

Decentralisation of power and authority is one safeguard for individual freedom. Therefore Gandhi conceives of a decentralised, stateless society of autonomous and self-sufficient village communities as the form of political organization consistent with his philosophy of truth and nonviolence.

In his interview with Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhi declared: "I look upon an increase of the power of the state with the greatest fear because it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying individuality" and therefore what "I would personally prefer would be not a centralization of power in the hands of the state." ¹⁸

Gandhi saw in the ancient India village panchayats the basic framework of a model constitution for free India. He talked loosely of village republics and village Swaraj and *Ramrajya* in the same breath as if they were one and the same.

Writing in the *Harijan* of 26 July 1942, Gandhi explained: "My idea of village swaraj is that it is complete republic, independent of its neighbours for its own vital wants, and yet interdependent for many others in which dependence is a necessity."¹⁹

"The Government of the village will be conducted by the panchayat of five persons annually elected by the adult villagers, male and female, possessing minimum prescribed qualifications. These will have all the authority and jurisdiction required. Since there will be no system of punishment in the accepted sense, this panchayat will be the legislature, judiciary, and executive combined to operate for its year of office."²⁰

Gandhi did not examine the question of relations of neighbouring villages and the Centre. He claimed that in the village government as outlined "there is perfect democracy based upon individual freedom. . . ."²¹

He returned to the same theme four years later. Independence was on the horizon and Gandhi was apprehensive that the Congressmen in general did not know the kind of independence they wanted. He gave a broad picture of an independent India of his own conception. He, in fact, identified independence with panchayat raj and said:

Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers.

In this way there will be innumerable village panchayats. There will be ever-widening, never-ascending circles. The structure will not be a pyramid with the apex sustained by the bottom. Gandhi explained, It will be an oceanic circle whose centre will be the individual always ready to perish for the circle of villages, till at last the whole becomes one life composed of individuals . . . sharing the majesty of the oceanic circle of which they are integral units . . . the outermost circumference will not wield power to crush the inner circle but will give strength to all within and derive its own strength from it.²²

Gandhi visualised a concentric circle, not a pyramid, of self-sustaining village republics with the individual as the basic unit. Each village will be an autonomous republic possibly joined together in a loose confederation.

It would seem that Gandhi conceived of political justice not only for the individual but for each village in relation to its neighbouring villages and in relation to the Centre, if any.

Panchayat Raj was for him an arrangement for investing the people with legitimate political authority to manage their affairs. It was also designed to free villages of the economic exploitation and political domination of the cities. He thus carried justice to a higher plane of consciousness.

Gandhi's panchayat raj safeguards the liberty of the individual and of the village community as a whole for the full moral development of both.

Economic Justice

Gandhi is aware that political institutions are relevant only to the extent that they secure the economic well-being of the people and social justice to them.

In his scheme of things, the first and foremost task of the panchayat is to meet the basic physical necessities of the people. He writes: "... every village's first concern will be to grow its own food crops and cotton for its cloth. It should have a reserve for its cattle, recreation, and playground for adults and children. Then if there is more land available, it will grow useful money crops. ... The village will maintain a village theatre, school, and public hall. It will have its own water works ensuring clean water supply. This can be done through controlled water tanks or wells. Education will be compulsory up to the final basic course."²³

Gandhi suggests that these activities will, as far as possible, be conducted on a cooperative basis.

Nonviolence with its technique of Satyagraha and non-cooperation will be the sanction of village community.²⁴

Gandhi's passion for *economic justice* can be seen in his theories of bread labour, trusteeship, and decentralised economy. These are typical of Gandhian economics.

Bread Labour

The doctrine of bread labour seeks to reinforce the dignity of labour, bridge over the gap between physical and mental labour, and increase national productivity. It is not so unusual as may appear at first sight. In a partial form it can be seen in the stipulation of the Constitution of the former USSR (1936) that "he who does not work, neither shall he eat."²⁵

Gandhi owed the doctrine of bread labour to his reading of John Ruskin's *Unto This Last* and Tolstoy's *Bread Labour*. The term, Gandhi told us, was coined by a Russian writer, named T.M. Bondare. Its echo will also be found in the Gita and the Bible.²⁶

The doctrine of bread labour stipulates that every man and woman should put in body labour to produce food. Gandhi admits that in reality this rule is essentially related to agriculture. The rule also presupposes labour in common with others, common labour with the body, in the closest cooperation.

Gandhi admits that since every body is not in a position to take to agriculture, body labour may take other forms. A person may spin or weave or take up carpentry or smithery, instead of tilling the soil, always regarding agriculture, however, to be his ideal. Gandhi adds that every one must be his own scavenger, "... the best thing would be for everyone to

dispose of his own waste. If this is impossible, each family should see to its own scavenging."²⁷

He advises us that everyone should commence bread labour as a scavenger.

Gandhi was asked why we should insist on a Rabindranath Tagore, or Raman earning his bread by manual labour? Is it not sheer wastage? Why should not brain workers be considered on a par with manual workers, for both of them perform useful social work To this Gandhi replied with an unqualified "No." He said:

Intellectual work is important and has an undoubted place in the scheme of life. But what I insist on is the necessity of physical labour. No man, I claim, ought to be free from that obligation. It will serve to improve even the quality of his intellectual output.²⁸

Gandhi saw several merits in bread labour:

- (i) It was good for health.
- (ii) It was not idle exercise but productive labour.
- (iii) Invidious distinctions of rank would disappear if everyone without exception acknowledged the obligation of bread labour.

In particular, "scavenging will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man."²⁹

- (iv) If all laboured for their food and cloth, there would be no scarcity, "no cry of over population, no disease. . . there will then be no rich and no poor, none high and none low, no touchable and no untouchable."³⁰

Gandhi laid the greatest emphasis on the duty of spinning, on Swadeshi and Khaddar. These became the external marks of a Gandhiite.

- (v) Bread labour would necessarily mean minimisation of wants and simple life. "We should then eat to live, not live to eat," says Gandhi.³¹

That the doctrine of bread labour is not practicable or relevant today is beside the point. What is important is that Gandhi looks upon justice not merely as matter of law courts but as an element informing the entire life process. Bread labour, spinning, Khadi, Swadeshi, all were the instruments of economic justice, to Gandhi.

Decentralized Economy

Gandhi held that decentralization both of state and economy was essential both for individual freedom and for social well-being. He was opposed to the concentration of wealth in few hands. He pleaded for economic equality³² which to him meant:

- (i) simple life and minimization of wants
- (ii) bridging the gulf between the rich and the poor to a bare minimum
- (iii) meeting the basic needs of everyone so that everyone should have enough for his food and clothing. "To each according to his need" Gandhi endorsed the Marxian ideal
- (iv) everyone must be assured a minimum standard of living, "balanced diet, a decent house to live in, facilities for the education of children and adequate medical relief"
- (v) abolishing the eternal conflict between capital and labour

Gandhi was opposed to industrialization. This was mainly with reference to consumer goods, such as food, cloth, utensils, furniture, and other items of daily needs.

He advocated that items of daily consumption be produced by villagers themselves, so that every village may be self-sufficient and not dependent upon mills and factories of the cities for these essentials of daily life. These should be small-scale cottage industries and rural based. This will have two advantages:

- (i) Industrialization of cities tends to impoverish villagers. With villagers meeting their daily needs in cottage industries, their wealth will no longer be sucked by cities.
- (ii) Decentralization of the consumer goods sector will be employment creating in rural areas where people suffer from under-employment or disguised unemployment, and need supplementary occupations.

Gandhi talks endlessly of spinning, Khadi, Swadeshi, as being essentials of village Swaraj.

He admits that large-scale, centralized mechanized production may be necessary in respect of key or heavy industries, but adds reservations:

- (A) I would not choose anything as a "key industry" that can be taken up by the villages with a little organizing.
- (B) Nothing will be allowed to be produced by cities which can be equally well produced by the villages.
"The proper function of cities is to serve as clearing houses for village products," he declared.³³
- (C) Where an industry was centralized the state will have to protect the parallel village production in cottage industries.

Gandhi concedes that the key industries will be state-owned. He writes: "... without having to enumerate key industries, I would have state ownership, where a large number of people have to work together. The ownership of the products of their labour, whether skilled or unskilled, will vest in them through the State."³⁴

However, he rules out the expropriation of the capitalists for, that would be an exercise of coercion and violence. Instead, "I would invite their cooperation in the process of conversion to state ownership."³⁵ Presumably it may mean a cooperative sector of economy in which private and public enterprises may exist side by side.

Marxism, which advocated abolition of private property and social ownership of the means of production, did not appeal to Gandhi for three reasons:

- (i) It was not averse to violence and coercion for bringing about the desired change in society;
- (ii) It denied God as well as religion, dismissing them as the opium of the masses;
- (iii) It denied individual freedom, thus paving the way for a totalitarian state.

Therefore Gandhi was driven to the theory of Trusteeship wherein he sought to combine (private) capitalist ownership with (social) socialist use of property.

The Trusteeship Theory

Trusteeship was the Gandhian alternative to Socialism of Marx. The theory stipulates that the owner of property, landlords, and industrialists alike, while retaining their title to the property, should of their own free will resolve to regard themselves as mere trustees of the property on behalf of the society.

Having so resolved, he should, barring the share which would be sufficient for his own personal and family requirements, dedicate the rest to the use and benefit of the poor and needy. The ethical justification for this self-renunciation is threefold:

One of them Gandhi explained thus: "Supposing I have come by a fair amount of wealth by way of legacy, or by means of trade and industry—I must know that all that wealth does not belong to me. What belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than that enjoyed by millions of others. The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community."³⁶

Two, every man has an equal right to the necessities of life even as birds and beasts have.

The capitalist must regard himself as a trustee for those on whom he depends for the making, retention, and increase of his capital.³⁷

Gandhi admonished them to "act as trustees, that is, owners not in their own right, but owners in the right of those whom they have exploited."³⁸

Three, everything belonged to God and was from God. Therefore when an individual had more than his proportionate portion, he becomes a

trustee for that portion for God's people. God desires that man should live from day to day and not stock things.³⁹

According to K.M. Munshi, "trusteeship is a limited projection of *asteya*—non-stealing. . . . Non-stealing as a universal principle is an aspect of the Eternal Moral order. According to it, to use one's possessions for individual enjoyment beyond what is needed for effective living is theft. . . ." ⁴⁰

Gandhi said the same thing: "A thing not originally stolen must nevertheless be classified as stolen property, if we possess it without needing it." ⁴¹

Besides the moral grounds, trusteeship theory was also justified by Gandhi on material grounds.

Material Grounds

1. Trusteeship will put an end to the eternal conflict between labour and capital. It will pave the way for equitable distribution of wealth and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. In this way it will bring about constructive revolution in a peaceful manner. Trusteeship stands for distributive justice, economic equality, and elimination of exploitation.
2. Trusteeship is an attempt to secure the best use of property for the people by competent hands.

It is a device to harness the services of successful businessmen and entrepreneurs into the cause of social production. Gandhi believed that natural talents differ from man to man and the society should not lose the services of any talented, enterprising, competent individual. He said: "I would allow a man of intellect to earn more. I would not cramp his talent. But the bulk of his greater earnings must be used for the good of the state. . . . They would have their earnings only as trustees. . . ." ⁴²

The trusteeship theory stipulates that the property owner will be entitled to a fee or commission out of the earnings from the property, and the rest would be trust property. In Gandhi's own inimitable words:

I will not dictate to them what commission to take, but ask them to take what is fair, e.g. I would ask a man who possesses Rs. 100 to take Rs. 50 and give the other Rs. 50 to the workers. But to him who possesses one crore rupees I would perhaps say, take 1% for yourself. So the commission would not be a fixed figure because that would result in atrocious injustice. ⁴³

It will be left to his conscience.

But later on Gandhi modified his stand and said: "The state would regulate the rate of commission which they would get commensurate with the service rendered and its value to society." ⁴⁴

Initially Gandhi envisaged that property owners will have the option of voluntarily converting themselves into trustees of their wealth. Pressure

could be brought to bear on them through nonviolent non-cooperation. If this failed, they could be obliged to do so by law. "But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below. . . the people themselves, beginning with gram panchayats, will begin to introduce such statutes."⁴⁵

Whether or not the theory of trusteeship is an exercise in building castles in the air, is beside the point. What is important is that the theory gives a glimpse of Gandhian vision of economic justice, resulting from a radical change in property relations. It is no less significant that the trusteeship theory ends up in the principle of distributive justice which was the final goal of communism, namely: from each according to his capacity to each according to his needs.

However, there is nothing else which may be said to be common to Gandhi and communism. One is the anti-thesis of the other.

Social Justice

Gandhi was the harbinger of the movement for social justice in India. Prior to him, poets, saints, and social reformers had drawn attention to social injustice resulting from caste discriminations and from the practice of untouchability. These could be traced back to Kabir, Chaitanya, Nanak, and in the nineteenth century, saints—Ravidas, Tukaram, Jyotiba Phule made names in the campaign for social equality and abolition of untouchability.

To Gandhi goes the distinction of admitting women and weaker sections of society as equal partners in the national freedom movement. He made the upliftment of the depressed classes—the Harijan—and emancipation of women the ultimate goal of political freedom.

Varnashram Dharma

Gandhi had implicit faith in *Varnashram Dharma*. He believed it to be divinely ordained. According to him, the *varnashram dharma* is the law of our being. It simply means "that everyone shall follow as a matter of dharma—duty—the hereditary and traditional calling of his forefathers in so far as it is not inconsistent with fundamental ethics, and this only for the purpose of earning his livelihood."

There were four *varnas* and they were like four parts of one's body, with none superior or inferior to the other, all equal to one another. If any *varna* were to arrogate superiority over another, it would be a distortion of the *varna dharma*. It holds that all occupations are equally honourable and no one is superior to any other.

A scavenger has the same status as a Brahmin, for, the community depends no less on one than on another. The gradation of *varnas*, as high and low, is a heinous travesty of the original law. The law of *varna* ordains that everyone shall fulfil the law of one's being by doing in a spirit of duty

and service that to which one is born. Earning of livelihood is the necessary result, but the law has to be fulfilled for its own sake. It is a duty owed to the self and the society. There should be no desire to amass wealth by encroaching upon other's profession.

Varna Dharma and Trusteeship

Gandhi holds that *Varnashram Dharma* enjoins that work should be done in a spirit of service of duty and all earning will be held by its holder in trust for the community.⁴⁶ No one will claim it as his own. What is essential is that one must seek one's livelihood, and no more, from following the vocation to which one is born.⁴⁷ The observance of this law by each varna (or class) will end mutual distrust and unfair competition, and, above all, the persecution and ill-treatment of the lowest order, that is the *shudras*. In fact, there is no place for untouchability in the law of *varna*.

Dignity of Labour

In fact, Gandhi treated all professions and occupations as equally worthy and honourable and any extra earning from it as being held in trust for the community. He, therefore, emphasized that manual work did not carry any social stigma. "If a barber or shoemaker attends a college, he ought not to abandon the profession of barber or shoemaker. . . a barber's profession is just as good as the profession of medicine."⁴⁸

The way to achieve complete social equality and justice was that everyone observed his or her *varna* Dharma strictly in a spirit of duty and service.

It would be seen that the *Varnashram Dharma* as described above has close affinity to Plato's scheme of threefold classification of society and each class confining itself to faithful performance of its allotted function and not meddling into the sphere of another. This is called justice in the *Republic* of Plato and dharma in the law of *varna* or *varna vyavastha*.

Caste and Varna

Gandhi insists that *varna* and caste are not one and the same. The caste system is in fact a distortion or excrescence of the *varnashram dharma*.⁴⁹

The caste system introduces hierarchy of status, opportunity, and freedom and discrimination in social relations. The tyranny of the caste system reaches the optimum degradation in the practice of untouchability.

Gandhi condemns untouchability in the strongest words: "I have been saying that if untouchability stays Hinduism goes"⁵⁰ or "For the general persecution of the lower orders of Hinduism, especially the co-called untouchable, I am as a Hindu doing penance every moment of my life"⁵¹ or "I find no place for untouchability in the law of *varna* or otherwise in Hinduism."⁵²

Gandhi was so much annoyed with the caste hierarchy and its degraded law that he made the startling proposal that all castes be submerged into the Shudras and the Shudras be known as Harijans, God's creation.

He said: "... it would be well to recognize ourselves as one *varna*, viz. Shudrās, even though some may be teaching and some may be soldiering as some others may be engaged in commercial pursuits."⁵³

Gandhi did not see any need of any kind of affirmative action or special provision specifically for the upliftment of the Harijans after India attained independence. He said: "Harijans are only 16% of the population while those who suffer from economic exploitation form at least 90% of the population."⁵⁴ So Harijans will also share automatically the fruits of social and economic development taking place in the country. As for job reservation, the idea, it seems, did not occur to him at all. The reason perhaps was that he regarded all occupations and professions as equally honourable. Every profession was a matter of duty or service and hankering after paying professions was nothing short of "high way robbery."⁵⁵

Conclusion

Though there is no specific theory of justice in Gandhism, Gandhian theories of Panchayati Raj, trusteeship, and *varnashrami dharma* are strong evidence of his concern with the problem of justice in all aspects, social, political, and economic. Art. 17 of the Indian Constitution is in a way a tribute to the relentless campaign of Gandhi both in words and deeds, for the abolition of untouchability. In other ways too, notably in the upgradation of the Panchayati Raj institutions, in the increasing focus on agriculture and rural economy, and on decentralization and, in general, on the empowerment of weaker sections of society, one can observe the legacy of Gandhi.

Notes and References

1. M.K. Gandhi, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1927), p. xv.
2. *Harijan*, 20 July 1947.
3. Tara Chand, "Gandhi's Technique and Revolution," in J.S. Mathur, ed., *Gandhian Thought and Contemporary Society* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974), p. 48. He writes: "But then what is truth, what is right? According to Gandhi, it is the utterance of an enlightened conscience, a conscience which is guided by reason and love, a conscience which is humble in its approach and which spares no pains to understand the meaning and nature of the good. Such an enlightened conscience... is for the individual the supreme and ultimate judge of truth."
4. *Harijan*, 2 January 1937.
5. *Ibid.*, 5 May 1946.
6. *Young India*, 24 February 1927.

7. *Harijan*, 1 February 1942.
8. M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1910), p. 98.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
10. *Young India*, 12 June 1924.
11. *Young India*, 28 May 1931.
12. In an interview with Nirmal Kumar Bose, Gandhi said: "... The state represents violence in a concentrated and organised form. The individual has a soul, but as the state is a soulless machine, it can never be weaned from violence to which it owes its very existence." J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi* (Allahabad: Chaitanya, 1962), p. 578.
13. *Harijan*, May 1939.
14. *Young India*, 29 January 1925.
15. *Harijan*, 20 April 1940.
At another place Gandhi wrote: "My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest." *Ibid.*, 18 May 1940.
16. Gandhi used rather harsh and intemperate language, which was unusual with him, to describe the British Parliament. He said: "That which you consider to be the Mother of Parliaments is like a sterile woman and a prostitute." Vide M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 31.
17. Cf. J.S. Mathur, ed., *Gandhian Thought and Contemporary Society* (Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 1974), pp. 97-99.
18. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 579.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
21. *Harijan*, 26 July 1942.
22. *Harijan*, 28 July 1946.
23. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 323.
24. *Harijan*, 26 January 1942.
25. Art. 12 of the 1936 Constitution of the USSR stipulates as follows:
"Work in the USSR is a duty and a matter of honour for every able-bodied citizen, in accordance with the principle: 'He who does not work, neither shall he eat'." This Constitution is, of course, now defunct.
26. The third Chapter of *Gita* says that he who eats without offering *yajna* is a thief, eats sin. To Gandhi *yajna* is body labour undertaken in a spirit of service.
Similarly the *Bible* enjoins: "Earn thine bread by the sweat of thy brow. . . ." The command of the Geneses: "In the sweat of thy face shalt ye eat bread."
St. Paul said: "If any would not work neither should he eat."
27. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, pp. 613-14.
28. *Harijan*, 23 February 1947.

29. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 614.
30. Gandhi wrote: "There can be no Ramrajya in the present state of iniquitous inequalities in which a few roll in riches and the masses do not get even enough to eat." *Harijan*, 1 June 1947.
The constructive programme, 1941, regarded cosmic equality as the master key to nonviolent independence. It means the levelling down of the few rich in whose hands is concentrated the bulk of the nation's wealth, and a levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 610.
31. *Harijan*, 29 June 1935. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 574.
32. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
33. *Harijan*, 28 January 1939.
34. *Harijan*, 1 September 1946.
35. *Ibid.*
36. *Harijan*, 3 June 1939.
37. *Young India*, 26 March 1931.
38. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 564.
39. *Harijan*, 23 February 1947.
40. K.M. Munshi, "Reconstruction of Society Through Trusteeship" in J.S. Mathur, *Gandhian Thought and Contemporary Society*, p. 161.
41. *Ibid.*, p. 180.
42. *Young India*, 26 November 1931.
43. Gandhi said: "The rich man will be left in possession of his wealth, of which he will use what he reasonably requires for his personal needs and will act as a trustee for the remainder to be used for the society. In this argument honesty on the part of the trustee is assumed." *Harijan*, 25 August 1940.
44. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946. Also see *Harijan*, 12 April 1942.
45. *Harijan*, 31 March 1946.
46. *Harijan*, 28 September 1934.
47. J.S. Mathur and A.S. Mathur, eds, *Economic Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 574.
48. *Ibid.*, p. 520.
49. "There is nothing in common between *varnashram* and caste. Caste is undoubtedly a drag upon Hindu progress." *Young India*, 20 October 1927. Again, "Varna has nothing to do with caste. Caste is an excrescence. . . upon Hinduism." *Young India*, 24 November 1927.
50. *Harijan*, 29 August 1936.
51. *Young India*, 17 January 1929.
52. *Young India*, 17 November 1927.
53. *Ibid.* Also see *Harijan*, 3 June 1939.
54. *Harijan*, 19 October 1935.
55. *Young India*, 24 November 1927.

Mobilising Rural Poor: *Mantrangal* of PWDS

R. Sooryamoorthy

MARTANDAM IN TAMIL Nadu in the late 1960s: Mighty palms were all around. And the palms produced a sweet sap, *neera*, in abundance. People turned to these palms in the hope of making a living, since their options were limited in the absence of suitable employment avenues. Risking their very lives, the poor ruralites resorted to tapping *neera*, which is brought down from a height of 60-70 feet, and then subjected to a process of jaggery making. Boiling *neera* required not only the labour of the tapper, but the entire family. Jaggery is used as sugar. However, it did not bring sweetness to the lives of the tappers. Instead, the tappers and their families experienced misery and sorrow. Society looked down upon them, for tapping was not regarded as a respectable job. Police harassed the tappers for no fault of theirs. The privileged communities around them too had their share of exploiting them. The traders snatched most of the fruits of their hard labour. Deaths from falls were common. Widows often outnumbered married women. Children laboured with their parents for their daily bread. Schools were out of reach for boys and girls.

PWDS (Palmyrah Workers' Development Society) emerged at this crucial point of history in Martandam, in the Kanyakumari District of Tamil Nadu. Moved by the pathetic life situations of palmyrah workers, Rt. Rev. Samuel Amirtham and his friends, gave blood and flesh to the idea of an organization. Although it began to work among the palmyrah workers in Kanyakumari (Tamil Nadu) and Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala) Districts, PWDS later made its presence in several districts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Following a scientific survey in 1975, among the palmyrah workers, PWDS was registered in 1977 as a society under the Societies Registration Act.

Initially, PWDS focused on three specific areas of social action: justice, social education for awareness, and economic development. PWDS started

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organizing the community. They were brought together to form grassroot-level organizations called *mantrangal*. Through these *mantrangal*, PWDS could effect a change in the mindset of the society towards palmyrah workers. Harassment by police and other communities started declining. Now, over 300 *mantragal* work under PWDS. Since 1975, PWDS developed numerous ways to improve the lives of not only the palmyrah workers but also of other poor sections of the society. New projects, programmes, and institutions were formed during these years. Thus progressively PWDS made its presence felt in eight districts (seven in Tamil Nadu and one in Kerala), 1,074 villages, and 25 taluks. In all these villages, there are 1,578 village-level groups, with a membership of 33,683 families. The savings of these groups, during April 1999 to March 2000, came to a whopping Rs 92,65,000. A total of 30,445 benefits of various kinds were generated under the developmental programmes of the organization. Awareness programmes have reached a total of 88,198 families in two States. In this paper we will focus on the *mantrangal* and their impact on the community.

Mantrangal are the grassroot units of PWDS. PWDS mobilized the palmyrah workers to form their own organizations as part of a people's movement. A *mantram* is a group of tappers, united for the purpose of working together to meet their own needs. It is envisaged that at the hamlet level, 25-50 palmyrah workers will constitute the basic group of a *mantram*. These groups are supposed to act as a cooperative enterprise, giving training in organization, skills, awareness education, improved methods of production and marketing, and will have their own elected office-bearers.

John Rose, the then Coordinator in charge of the Movement Division of the PWDS, borrowed this idea from the organization named *Saniathura Samudaya Iyakkam* in Tiruchendur, an organization of palmyrah workers, fishermen, and quarry workers. Rose found it appropriate to label these small groups *mantrangal*. In a way, they were a kind of local clubs. They were conceived to be autonomous entities with their own elected members as leaders, capable of taking decisions and able to manage by themselves. These bodies, as conceived in the beginning, should be able to empower the members and even question the prevalent exploitative practices concerning them. In the beginning, there were 278 such *mantrangal*, with a membership range of 30-50. Under each unit, there were 10-15 *mantrangal*.

KUZHUKKAL

In fact, *mantrangal* are an advanced form of small groups of tappers called *kuzhukkal*. These groups would usually assemble at the home of any of its tapper-members. In *kuzhu kootangal* (group meetings), a number of themes centred around matters concerning their occupation of tapping and jaggery making were discussed. The price of the product, the involvement of middlemen and exploitation, difficulties in getting the postmortem done in

the event of a death from fall, police harassment, and the trouble of honey-bees¹ were among the issues which found favour with tappers for deliberation. Matters of current events—regional, national, and international—and themes of the prevalence of social evils such as caste discrimination, too, entered these fora. They were found to be useful in making them aware of what was happening around their small worlds. Women did not appear on the scene then. They had separate women's groups. In 1983, there were 135 women's groups. There were 562 such groups with a membership of 20-50 in 1981.

In the beginning, there were about ten *mantrangal* functioning under five regions. The volunteers, CDWs and supervisors were enthusiastic in initiating the groups of palmyrah workers. A spirit of competition prevailed among them while presenting the activities of the *mantrangal* at the regular weekly meetings. Such meetings usually would last till late in the evening, say around 6-6.30 p.m.

The volunteers would also visit the homes of the tappers and collect money for both the welfare and *mantram* funds. PWDS was to only act as a grant-channelizing agent, and work as a centre of resources, leaving everything to the leaders of *mantrangal*.

MEMBERSHIP

Mantrangal, since their formation in 1984, have undergone several changes. As for membership in *panai thozhilalar mantrangal*, only tappers were allowed in the beginning. When the tappers moved to other profitable occupations, they got disenchanted with *mantram* activities and, consequently, participation of tappers in *mantram* activities got thinned down. The declining importance of the occupation of tapping and consequent reduction in the number of people engaged in the occupation, and losing interest of the tappers in *mantram* had taken its toll on the membership of *mantrangal*. Meanwhile PWDS organized several skill training programmes in carpentry, masonry, and electrical repair work for the drop-outs of the children of tappers.

PWDS explored ways to strengthen these people's organizations. Meanwhile, the non-tappers in several villages had been evincing interest in *mantrangal* and seeking membership in them. It was felt that bringing the other occupational groups in the villages to the fold of *mantrangal* was appropriate and helpful. Soon, not only the people who were occupied in jobs associated with palm (jaggery, candy, leaf, fibre, wood, etc.), but others in similar occupations including agricultural workers were given membership of *mantrangal*. This happened during 1988-89 when there were 202 tapper *mantrangal*, including the two newly formed ones in the year. The Managing Committee, in its meeting held on 7 June 1990, accepted this change in principle. Since then, a change in the complexion of the membership was apparent. Following this, there were concerted efforts to strengthen the membership in later years, too.

TYPES

Mantrangal are of three types, according to the nature of members: *panai thozhilalar mantrangal* have only tappers as members, *mahalir mantrangal* are meant for women, and *grama mantrangal* admit not only tappers but others who belong to the backward segments of the society.

When some *panai thozhilalar mantrangal* were found to be weak in terms of membership, they merged with the neighbouring *mahalir mantrangal*, and formed *grama mantrangal*. Vazhode *Grama Mantram*, for example, was originally a *mahalir mantram*. It was converted into a *Grama Mantram* on 6 July 1995 due to insufficient member-strength. There are also cases of tapper *mantrangal* transforming into *mahalir mantrangal*.

The Arumanai *Mahalir Mantram* was originally a tapper *mantram* when it was formed on 23 November 1986. There were about 75 members. But the tapper members were not regular in attending the meetings, and participation dropped gradually. At the suggestion of the PWDS functionaries, the Arumanai Tapper *Mantram* was converted into a *mahalir* one.

THE STRUCTURE

Manning *mantrangal* is a serious job, more so when the leaders are neither educated, nor have any experience in running an organization, however small it may be. They need regular training in keeping accounts, procedures on meetings, legal affairs, and in approaching the government for securing their rights and privileges. PWDS takes care of these things and does it scrupulously.

The number of members in *mantrangal* for the moment is usually in the range of 20 to 45. They meet once in a month at least, and the frequency of meetings may change in relation to the needs. The meetings sometimes take place at their own buildings, as some *mantrangal* have, in rented spaces or in the vicinity of any member's house. *Mantrangal* would elect their own leaders democratically. There will be a president (*thalavar*), secretary (*shelalar*) and treasurer (*porulalar*), who will be assisted by four executive committee members, including one woman representative. Elections to the positions will be held every three years, usually during the months of October-November. The members wield the right to remove them, in case there are deviations from the accepted norms.

FUNCTIONS

The activities of *mantrangal* have a varied character, ranging from mobilizing resources to helping the members when they are entangled in police cases and conflicts. The resources mobilized in the *mantram*, along with a monthly contribution (*mantra santha*) of Re 1, go to the *mantram* fund. Resources are pooled in from other sources as well: Governmental agencies, banks and

other financial institutions. This fund, *mantra nidhi*, serves the members as a bank to get loans at times of contingency.

For the members who fall invariably in the lower rungs of the economic class, small loans are a boon. It is convenient for them, as they are not squeezed by the exorbitant rates of interest of the village money-lenders. They need not produce any guarantee to take small loans from the *mantrangal*. For those who have no assets, as is often the case, such loans are helpful at times of exigency.

Mantrangal encourage members to take up new ventures that could give them a means of livelihood. At the community level, *mantrangal* often take the initiative, and give leadership in matters related to the pressing needs of the village, namely drinking water, roads, and transportation facilities. Struggle for drinking water often takes them to the government authorities. Adaikakuzhi *Mantram* mobilized support for maintaining the public well in the village clean and usable. The Block Development Officer had to act swiftly, and the well was cleaned to solve the drinking water problem in the village. In a significant effort, the Gnanadhasapuram *Mantram* was finally able to obtain *patta* rights of land for about 45 palmyrah workers in September 1990.

Mantrangal also take charge of making arrangements for selling their products like jaggery, in order to avoid middlemen, and earn better price for their commodities. In Karumpettor area, jaggery is collected and sold under the direction of the *mantram*.² Stocking jaggery until the demand rises, arranging firewood for tappers and leasing palmyrah trees have become part of the functions. Settling disputes between the members on personal and family matters, and on wages, have also turned out to be an activity of these organizations.

The activities of the *mantrangal* bind the villagers together, providing a forum for them to settle the issues that may arise between themselves from time to time.³ There were instances in which *Mantrangal* played a creative role in maintaining peace and harmony in the village. When communal rivalry rears up its ugly face, *mantrangal* could intervene and avert clashes.⁴

Working for common cause has been the hallmark of a number of *mantrangal*. Even *mahalir mantrangal* were active in this respect. Arumanai *Mahalir Mantram* has a history of this kind. It mobilized people to construct a thoroughfare in the village. There was a pathway in Manankani, near Arumanai. One day, the owner of the land, Madurayyan, blocked the road. The women members organized the youth in the village and cut down all the trees along this road. Police intervened and finally the road was reopened to the public. Now, the panchayat is developing the road into a broader one. A similar instance happened when the Vanniyode and Inchivilai *mantrangal* mobilized the villagers to construct a road linking two villages of Vanniyode and Karadi.

Mantrangal often serve as a platform for deliberations. Occasionally, lectures, seminars, and discussions are organized, which center around

topical subjects: alcoholism, dowry, small savings, health and hygiene, self-reliance, rights of labour, consumer rights, banking vocabulary, environmental protection, natural resources, welfare schemes of the government, housing, economic development, rural development, and socio-economic realities include the favoured themes.⁵ *Mantrangal* take up the social responsibility of educating people on certain values such as cooperation and self-reliance. In the process, they learn to cultivate their latent leadership qualities, and acquire the skills to tackle problems by themselves. Once in a while, these organizations, as part of their activities, arrange training sessions for their members on maintenance of accounts and production of materials for house construction and in community health.

The State, in its welfare agenda, has a number of schemes. *Mantrangal* look for such schemes, as, IRDP, schemes for the handicapped, Old Age Pension Scheme, Widow support etc., and liaison with the government to make them available for the benefit of their members. In short, *mantrangal* function as a village court, a village bank, a village training centre, and a village forum.

GREEN, YELLOW, AND RED

The emphasis on viability, sustainability and, self-reliance in the PWDS programmes, particularly since the fourth phase, necessitated corresponding changes in the orientation of *mantrangal*. The intention was to make these small organizations self-reliant and self-managed ones. Accordingly, they were classified into three categories. The already self-reliant ones are to be labelled "green," those moving towards self-reliance are "yellow" and those dependent greatly on PWDS are "red." A set of criteria was prepared in this connection.

As of August 1999, there are sixty green *mantrangal*. To gain the status of "green," the *mantram* should have:

- ★ a minimum of twenty members if it is a tapper *mantram* or 25 members in case of either a *grama mantram* or a *mahalir mantram*
- ★ regular attendance at the meetings needs to be at least 75 per cent.
- ★ a minimum of Rs 20,000 in the *mantra nidhi*
- ★ proved the ability to assume the responsibility for the collection and remittance of loans to the respective institutions
- ★ a permanent office building, either owned or rented
- ★ only minimum involvement of PWDS staff in the functioning

MANTRA NIDHI, LOANS, AND BORROWERS

The *mantra nidhi* of *mantrangal* is in the range of Rs 2,000-40,000. For instance, the Vazhode *Grاما Mantram* has collected funds worth Rs 24,677,⁶

which is available as loans for its members to start small-scale enterprises, namely selling salt and rice flakes, and rearing goats. In the case of Charur Grama Mantram, as on 20 August 1999, a total of Rs 53,870 was in circulation as loans in the range of Rs 200-2,750. The *mantra nidhi* has now reached the mark of Rs 30,860.

Funds of *mantrangal* are being used for a revolving scheme of loans. In 1999, the palmyrah workers *mantrangal* had a total funds of Rs 43,30,326. Loans for the members accrue an interest of 24 per cent per annum, which, according to the members, is moderate compared to the exorbitant rates of the money-lenders in the village. By 1992, 9,733 persons had obtained loans to the tune of Rs 20,57,370. Within a year, i.e., by 1993, 14,268 persons were able to take out *mantram* loans. In 1997, *mantrangal* disbursed a total of Rs 30,78,336 as loans, and in 1999, the loan amount stood at Rs 86,18,725 in tapper *mantrangal* alone. The respective figure for *mahalir mantrangal* was Rs 14,41,311. A total of 6,868 persons have so far obtained loans.

MAMANTRANGAL

A number of *mantrangal* in one area, which come under each unit, unite to form a collective entity of *mamantrangal*. To begin with, in 1984, there were 25 *mamantrangal* representing 25 respective units, and now the number is 36.⁷ The members of a *mamantram* are constituted by the Executive Body of all *mantrangal*. At the regional level, there will be a body called Regional Advisory Body (*Vattara Alosanai Kuzhu*), formed by the presidents, secretaries, and treasurers in each region. The presidents, secretaries, and treasurers of all *mamantrangal* form the *Peravai*, the apex constitutional body of palmyrah workers.

Several *mamantrangal* have started training centres for the benefit of palmyrah workers and their families. Tailoring centres and a few pre-school centres, for instance, are functioning under the auspices of *mamantrangal*.⁸

PERAVAI

Following the formation of *mamantrangal*, the attempt was to give shape to a body at the district level. Thus *Peravai* was born in the *panakkudil*, at the central office of the PWDS in Martandam on 20 July 1985. *Peravai* has an executive committee. All the *mamantram* executive committees constituted the General Body of the *Peravai*. K. Devarajan, a tapper, became the first chairman of the organization. Seven persons from PWDS represented the *Peravai* (MMC, 8 October 1985). They include the president or vice-president, assistant programme coordinator for women's programme, a nursery supervisor, a regional supervisor, a volunteer, a health worker and a palmyrah worker member in the Managing Committee. John Rose, PWDS Programme coordinator, became the secretary and Kanyakumari Selvaraj the treasurer.⁹ Besides, it was decided to give shape to the idea of an

organization of palmyrah workers known as *Thamizhaga Panai Thozhilalar Iyakkam* along the lines of *Samathuva Samuthaya Iyakkam*, an organization of this kind functioning in Madurai.

The aged and disabled tappers are rendered help, though nominally, by the *Peravai*, in the form of a pension of Rs 20 a month. This scheme was commenced on 30 May 1992. For this purpose, a fund was created jointly by the *Mantrangal*, *mamantrangal* and *Peravai* to the tune of Rs 75,000 and PWDS contributed its share of Rs 25,000. It grew to Rs 1,12,000 by the year 1993. The interest accrued from it is being used to give pension to 60 eligible ex-tappers. The scheme at present (1998) benefits 104 invalid tappers.

MAHALIR MANTRANGAL

Panai thozhilalar mantrangal or tapper *mantrangal* admit only men as members. Arising from the need to mobilize the womenfolk, and to pay attention to the mundane problems they face, *mahalir mantrangal* were organized for the womenfolk. During 1984-84, 140 such women *mantrangal* were formed. The strength in each one varied from twenty to sixty. Currently, there are 108 women *mantrangal*. Occasionally the *mantrangal* meet together.

The focus of activities of these women-led organizations is not confined to the issues affecting them alone, but cuts across gender, class, and other socio-economic barriers. Nevertheless, the major thrust falls on women and children. The programmes undertaken under the auspices of *mahalir mantrangal* could be either community-based or individual-based, depending on the necessity. Saving and credit remain the major activity of these organizations. In 1998-99, 672 persons were able to borrow an amount of Rs 1,19,450 as loans for their urgent needs.

ACTIVITIES

The record of activities reveals the initiatives taken by these women *mantrangal* in social issues, even working against the powerful, for the benefit of the common man. Towards this end, *mantram* activities such as the campaign against liquor shops, recapturing the footpath from the landlord who had annexed it to his land, and helping in inter-caste marriages¹⁰ are their means. In Konam village, there is a footpath leading to the hamlets in Purathivilai and Kalivilagam. A landlord in the area attached the footpath to his property and constructed a wall around it. The *Mahalir Mantram* in the village took up this act of encroachment of public property with the authorities. But the landlord retaliated by registering false cases against the *Mantram* members. Undeterred, the members continued their efforts and, finally, the Panchayat authorities were made to retrieve the land from the landlord.

In a way, *mahalir mantrangal* were concerned about not just women, but the whole community. Some of them could work for a daily market or a grocery shop in the villages.¹¹ Vazhacode *Mahalir Mantram* got a fillip, in the form of many new members, when its struggles bore fruit in getting public transportation facility in the village. In a number of villages, they had spearheaded struggles against alcoholism and illicit liquor sales. At Thellanthi village, *mahalir mantram* could stop the sale of illicit liquor. Another shop at Kulapuram was removed. Later, a country-liquor shop was shifted from Panachaparambu village by the work of Kalaikkavila *Mahalir Mantram*.

The village folks depend greatly on the public distribution system for their major commodities of consumption. They are given a card, called Ration Card, to purchase commodities from the public distribution outlets at subsidized prices. The quantity of things obtainable from these outlets corresponds to the number of members in the family and, sometimes, for some commodities, the income of the family. In Devicode village there were some irregularities in the issuance of these cards. *Mahalir Mantram* came forward to represent the matter to the authorities and settled things right.

Fighting for several social causes, either settling family disputes or working against the sale of liquor or getting involved in literacy mission,¹² these women's associations earned acceptance and credibility in the community. In one instance, it had even intervened in a case in which the husband was demanding dowry from his wife. In another case, a *mahalir mantram* helped an inter-caste couple to settle down in the village. When there was a need for a provision store in the village, women in the *mantram* in Kuttaicode village joined together to start a cooperative store. In the same village, they could start a daily market too.

Seminars on topics related to family, women, and children also find a prominent place in the programmes of *mahalir mantrangal*. Poor children are helped in their education by way of books, fees, and clothes. Women *mantrangal* assume a key role in the execution of the Community Health Programme of PWDS.

Despite resistance, the endeavours of these women-led organizations often met with success. They strove for facilities in the villages, namely roads, potable water, and primary health centres, to mention a few. Securing benefits for their members from the Government, particularly for the aged, widows, pregnant women, and the unemployed, was also an active role of these organizations. During 1995-56, they could mobilize DIR loans worth Rs 3,83,000 for 240 beneficiaries and IRDP loans worth Rs 11,92,000 for 226 persons.

Similar to the organizations of their male counterparts, women *mantrangal* too instilled saving mentality in the minds of the people. The small savings scheme was thus begun, offering the members the opportunity to save and pool their savings, to be utilized in the form of loans. Funds are

mobilized from banks and are used to give as loans to members to start self-employment ventures.

As in tapper *mantrangal*, the functionaries such as president, secretary, treasurer, and committee members (usually four) are elected for a term of three years. Toeing the path of tapper *mantrangal*, the women too felt it necessary to form their own regional and district organizations. Soon, an ad hoc committee, entrusted with the task of charting the aims, rules, and structure was formed during 1991-92. Deliberations continued in the committee regarding the structure: whether to follow a two-tier or a three-tier system. Finally, it was agreed on a three-tier organizational structure consisting of six regional *Vattara Mahalir Amaippu* and a district level organization called *Mavatta Mahalir Peravai* was formed on 15 February 1993. When its own *Peravai* was conceived, the objectives became broader. Each *mahalir mantram* can send its representatives, usually two elected office bearers, to the *Vattara Mahalir Amaippu*, and one among them will go to the district organization, *Mavatta Mahalir Peravai*. Executive Committees of the elected office bearers of all the *Vattara mahalir Amaippu* will form the *Mavatta Mahalir Peravai*.

STRUGGLES OF MANTRANGAL

During the span of over 16 years, since the formation of *mantrangal* in 1984, there have been a number of remarkable episodes in their history. Targeting the tappers to enable them to seize their legitimate rights, and to earn a fair deal from the society and the State, collective and organized efforts were made on a number of occasions. *Mantrangal* spearheaded a series of such endeavours.

Ten Demands

A meeting of the office-bearers was held at the Kalaivanar Auditorium in Nagercoil. This district-based meeting, held on 10 August 1984, has turned out to be a momentous one. Approximately 10,000 palmyrah workers attended the meeting. On the occasion, a set of ten demands of the tappers was prepared and then submitted to the Government. The demands were basic in nature, asking for a sympathetic deal from both the State and society. They included a request for support from the Government at times of accidents, facilities for health, housing, and education, and better price for their products.

Against Police Atrocities

Mantrangal, with the support of PWDS, have several times protested against the ill-treatment meted out to the community by the police and government officials. One such instance sprang from the arrest of Charles Nadar, a tapper member of the Malayadi *Mantram*. He was kept in custody by the police officer in Kalaikkavila police station, presumably for no justifiable

reasons.¹³ Against this, a large number of tappers, women and children, assembled at Kalaikkavila Junction, taking an *ooruvalam* from Patanthalummoodu on 16 November 1987. Political parties of different hues attended this protest meeting and expressed their concern and solidarity with the cause of the tappers.

A sit-in was held later in front of the office of the *Thahasildar*, Thuckalay, on 28 March 1988 demanding termination of the continuing police atrocities. The protest was also aimed at the apathetic attitude of the government towards the rights of palmyrah workers.

... Ensuing years witnessed similar struggles. To put an end to the harassment and atrocities by the police and excise officials towards tappers, the *mantram* leaders approached the police and excise officials to refrain from such troublesome acts, but in vain.

On 9 May 1988, an all-party meeting was convened at Azhagiamandapam. Thousands of palmyrah workers and their well-wishers participated in the meeting. Since then, there was a perceptible change in the attitude of the police and excise personnel. The situation was thus changing, or made to change, in favour of a community which has been subjected to numerous ways of social and economic discrimination for a long time. The struggles were instrumental in enabling the community to earn the dignity and acceptance it deserved. When the police refused to file cases on genuine issues, the community was encouraged and supported by PWDS to file private cases against the culprits. It also prevented the police and the State from the regular acts of harassing and arresting the tappers on one pretext or other. The tapper families, including women, were not spared in such acts. The fallout of these struggles and agitations was not trifling. Police officers got transferred and some of them even got demoted.¹⁴

The power of *mantrangal* to shield the lives of palmyrah workers was evident in a number of forms. The instance that happened on 9 April 1985 is quite revealing in this connection:

A tapper was attacked by a local political leader when the former refused to give toddy to the leader. The bleeding tapper went to the police station to report the matter. As the person involved in the event was influential, the police did not take the matter seriously. The tapper was sent away. He then went to the Kuzhithurai Hospital for treatment. He had 13 stitches on his head and was discharged on the third day without proper treatment. Obviously, the injury was due to the intervention of the leader. PWDS took him to the Nagercoil District Hospital for treatment.

Following this, a procession from Uthachikottai to Puthukkadai Markêt was taken to protest against the indifference of the police and the doctor. Over a thousand men, women, and children took part in it. The effect was such that finally the sub-inspector, the head constable, and the doctor were transferred.

The change in the level of confidence, and the improvement in their

status becoming clearer and clearer with these incidents. The saying in the community goes like this:

There was a time the tappers used to fall prey to the police, who identified them by noticing the *kayippu* on their body (hardened and dark tissue on the ankles, chest, and palm). The police picked them up and put them in the vehicle to take them to the police station believing that they were toddy drinkers. Now, ever since the tappers proved their unity and collective strength, if the police find someone among those caught for some reasons in the police vehicle with the same *kayippu* on the body, he will be immediately dropped on the way. The police would not take the person to the station, for the police know very well the strength of the tappers, and taking them to the station was like inviting a chain of troubles.

This saying has a basis. When the sub-inspector of the Thovalai police station was doing his regular rounds in his jurisdiction, he took into custody a group of people at Ettamadi, and put them in the police vehicle. While on their way to the police station, the police constable in the vehicle recognized that three among the group were palmyrah workers, which he immediately conveyed to the sub-inspector. The vehicle suddenly came to a halt to release the palmyrah workers.

Among the struggles led by the *mantranga*l, the Gnanadhasapuram one is notable. Gnanadhasapuram hamlet occupies a significant place in the history of PWDS. It relates to the story of tappers in Gnanadhasapuram, who required pieces of land to raise their shelters. This desire soon got crystallized into a collective endeavour. That was the beginning of a struggle for obtaining *patta* rights over the government land, which they had occupied.

STRUGGLE FOR LAND RIGHTS

The Gnanadasapuram Incident

Easanthimangalam village in Thovalai Taluk in Kanyakumari District consists of 11 *ooru* or *kugramams*.¹⁵ It is nearly ten kms. away from the PWDS Nagercoil Regional Office, on the Nagercoil-Kulasekharam route. Gnanadasapuram *ooru* is one of the beautiful hilly tracts of the sprawling 963 ha. Easanthimangalam village. The population of the village, according to the estimates of the village officials, is around 4000, and Gnanadasapuram has a population of roughly 400.

Not long ago, a good number of the tappers in the area were tapping the trees owned by wealthy people. Living conditions of the tapper families remained bad, and most of the time during the year, they were under the grip of poverty. The palms grown on government land nearby were taken on lease by the owners. The practice is that half of the *neera* collected will go to the owner on a fifty-fifty basis. That is, the collected *neera* for a day will be given to the owner while that of the next day can be taken by the tappers.¹⁶

When the tappers were working for the palmyrah-owners, they were allowed to erect sheds on the land of the owners, wherein they lived with their families. Once the season was over for the year, the tappers, along with their families, were sent out of their thatched sheds. It was a common practice then. The tappers had no other way out but to vacate the place. In this worsening state of affairs, PWDS began to mobilize them. United in this helpless situation, collective efforts were made so as to improve their lot. A series of events was to follow.

On 15 October 1984, a procession was taken out from the Indian Overseas Bank Junction to the Thovalai *Taluk* office in Bhuthapandy. The meeting, inaugurated by Arthur Harris, made seven demands concerning the life and work of tappers. About 250 people participated in it, shouting for a fair deal from the government: palms on lease, *patta* over the land, marketing opportunities for palm products, and free medical and educational facilities were their major needs.

Scared by the unusual show of strength and unity, palmyrah-owners began to distance themselves from the tappers. Ill-treatment was adopted as a means to get rid of the tappers. Tapper families were no more welcome to reside on the land of the owners, and the latter began evacuating the families already living on their land. Four tapper families were thus thrown out of their living sheds erected on the land of the palmyrah owners. It became a serious issue. Gnanadasapuram *Mantram*¹⁷ took up the matter. Deliberations were held in the meetings.

A series of *satyagraha* was then organized to press for the demand. Workers, women, and children, turn by turn, took part in these fast *Satyagrahas*. A children's fast was also organized on 14 November (the National Children's Day celebrated to emphasize the importance of children in the country). A telegram was sent to the Prime Minister, informing him that 14 young children were starving on the National Children's Day for a piece of land to build their shelters. This had an instant effect. In the evening of the same day, the Collector sent his men to invite tappers for talks.

Mantram members knew that, in the locality, there were people who had been possessing government land and paying tax on such land under RC-2 *patta*.¹⁸ The *Mantram* then decided to form a committee to find out the locations of such government land under the custody of individuals. Coaxing the officials at the Easanthimangalam village office, the Committee managed to get the details of such land, held particularly by those who had not paid the tax for the previous years. There was a stretch of 2.4 acres of land (Survey No. 120) in the possession of a wealthy person named Rajayya. He was not only wealthy and influential, but a strong political leader too. The Committee found out that the person had not paid tax for twenty years or so, and felt that this land would be appropriate for building shelters for the thrown-out tappers.

The tappers, meanwhile, with the support of PWDS, tried to negotiate with Rajayya to buy the land at an affordable price. It did not materialize as Rajayya demanded a huge sum. The *Mantram* finally zeroed in on this piece of land where huts could be erected for the homeless tappers. Towards this end, things were planned meticulously. PWDS, *Peravai* leaders, and *mantram* members took part in devising the strategy. A plan was thus made ready regarding the location of huts, earmarking even a place for the *mantram* building. *Peravai* asked the nearby *mantrangal* to send at least two each of their strong men to help in the struggle of Gnanadasapuram *Mantram*. Arrangements were also made so that the tapping of these strongmen, who had been moved to Gnanadasapuram, would be shared by their fellowmen.

The fast in front of the Thovalai *Taluk* office continued. Again, from 9 January 1986 to 23 January 1986, fasting was carried out without relent. Pressure began to mount on the officials to settle the matter. Finally, on 23 March 1986, 2 C *Patta* was issued to all the 45 tapper families. Each of them, on an average, got five cents of land. A few cents of land was earmarked for a *mantram* building. As usual, it was made an official function of the government, and the families received *patta* from the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu at Kanyakumari on 6 September 1990. That was the end of a long struggle, though one may question whether the end justifies the means employed.

MANTRANGAL TODAY

Over a period of 15 years, the *mantrangal* have become more or less permanent structures. The number continued to grow steadily, forming 295 in 1999. Tapper *mantrangal* alone could bring 4,409 families to their fold. The figure for *grama mantrangal* is 2,599. In *mahalir mantrangal*, there are 3,114 members. In accordance with the number of units, there are now 36 *mamantrangal*. A number of *mantrangal* have received donations from the people in the form of lands and buildings. At least 13 of them have been able to construct their own buildings.

In congruence to the policy shift of PWDS, the involvement in the management of *mantrangal* has been reduced to the minimum. Ultimately, it is to make the *mantrangal* self-managed and self-reliant ones. It was decided that since the seventh phase, the CDW will have to look after more *mantrangal* than the usual ones. EZE, too, was in favour of reducing the role of CDWs and leaving it to people. This means, for every unit there will be only a single CDW instead of the present two CDW per unit. According to the plan finalized in 1994, the *mantrangal* had to be linked and affiliated to formal institutions for getting access to skills and resources.

Money transaction being the major activity, accounts relating to daily collection, payment, and disbursement of loans have to be maintained properly. It involves considerable amount of work. The respective CDW¹ in

charge of the *mantram* has been doing this work. With the intention of making *mantrangal* independent and self-sustainable, PWDS counselled *mantrangal* to hire someone to do the job of maintaining accounts. The *mantrangal* appointed a paid helper to do the accounting work, thereby minimizing the role of the CDWs. For the moment, as of 1999, 89 tapper *mantrangal* and 65 *mahalir mantrangal* have appointed helpers (*uthaviyalar*).¹⁹ *Uthaviyalar* are paid a sum ranging from Rs 25 to 100 for a day's work whenever there is a meeting. The amount of remuneration varies, depending on the number of members and the volume of work the helper has to do. Quite a few number of SHGs were also formed under the auspices of *mantrangal*.

What is the place of the *mantrangal* in the lives of the people in the village? The answer is quite evident from the way they attend the meeting, bringing in their small collection to pay back the loans in easy instalments, and presenting their requests for new small loans.

PWDS felt that direct involvement of the society in the affairs of tappers (to fight for the rights of the tappers, and to end the harassment meted out to them frequently by the police and false cases registered against them in the name of public nuisance) was the need of the hour. It had to work towards self-management and sustainability, and tappers were made eligible for manning the *mantrangal* on their own. It is true that PWDS experienced difficulties when it attempted to engage itself in such activities aimed at improving the lot and prestige of the tapper community. When they strove to gain their legitimate rights as citizens and as workers, they invariably faced stiff resistance from the government and were even subjected to oppressive tactics. PWDS felt it was imperative to secure the rights of the tappers if their living conditions were to be improved, and also to help them climb up the social ladder. At this stage a clear distinction between PWDS as a development organization and as a people's movement was made out. It was done with a clear conception of structure and role for each one. Thus the scope of PWDS and its programmes was enlarged from tapper community to other poor groups in the villages as well. In the process, *mantrangal* have become a sort of *gram sabha* where all poor people are given representation.

Notes and References

1. Honey-bees, reared in the *panamgad* by non-tappers, attack the tappers while they climb palms. Bees drink the *neera* too.
2. In Thidal village in Kanyakumari district, for instance, such an arrangement was made, under the responsibility of a tapper, for selling jaggery. See *Annual Report 1989-90*, p. 1.
3. *Mantrangal* also attempt to settle disputes over property. Viricode *Mantram* has a record of involvement in this regard. See *Annual Report 1990-91*, p. 4.

In another instance, when the help of the *mantram* in Sadayalputhooor was sought in partitioning the family property, it was settled amicably with the help of the PWDS lawyer. The family could not solve the problem for 15 years. See *Annual Report 1993-94*, pp. 16-17.

4. An instance of this was reported from the Nalloor Konam *Mantram*. See *Annual Report 1990-91*, p. 3.
5. The number of meetings held during a year by all these organizations is really huge. It has been recorded that, during 1992-93, altogether 2,400 meetings were held.
6. As on 19 August 1999.
7. As on December 1999.
8. There are now six such centres at Agasteeswaram, Ammandivilai, Ayira, Devicode Sadayalputhooor and Vattavilai. See *Annual Report 1990-91*, p. 5.
9. The general body of the organization was constituted by the presidents, secretaries, and treasurers of *mamantrangal*.
10. A girl in Poozhikunnu became pregnant in an affair with a person belonging to another caste. When the boy refused to marry her, the *mahalir mantram* in the area intervened and conducted the marriage in the presence of the panchayat president. See *Annual Report 1990-91*, p. 10.
11. Kuttaicode Village, for instance.
12. About 143 honorary animators of *mahalir mantrangal* assisted 1,142 illiterates to turn to literates. See *Annual Report 1991-92*, p. 23.
13. In a similar incident, Dharmar who belonged to Lakshmipuram *Mantram*, was arrested by the police on charges relating to illicit country liquor on 30 October 1990. In fact, he was innocent. The *Mantram* took up the matter and the enquiry confirmed his innocence. He was finally released. See *Annual Report 1990-91*, p. 3.
14. In response to the arrest and torture of a tapper, a procession of 300 men, women, and children was taken out on 11 January 1985. As a consequence of this, the sub-inspector concerned and head constable of the police station were transferred. See *Annual Report 1984-85*, p. 5.
15. They are Arasankuli, Easanthimangalam, Govindapuram, Gnanadasapuram, Mangulam, Martandanellor, Mathias Nagar, Nangadi, Puliyankulam, Thovrangaud and Varagunamangalam.
16. This is called the *varam* system referred to earlier.
17. Gnanadasapuram *Mantram*, with 30 members now, was founded on 17 September 1984.
18. Individuals possessing such land need to pay only a nominal tax. But the government can take over the land whenever it wants.
19. The total number of helpers varies from year to year.

Position Paper on Agriculture

People' Campaign against Globalization

ON 5TH DECEMBER 2000, Mr Prakash Singh Badal, in his valedictory address at the Agro Tech 2000 in Chandigarh had said: "The implementation of WTO Agreement in the present form would lead to bloodshed in the country." For Mr Badal "signing of the WTO amounted to signing the death warrant of the farm sector." This is the statement by the Chief Minister of the most prosperous state of Punjab which is also called the breadbasket of India. About five years after the signing of the WTO, the Chief Ministers of different states feel the same about the WTO policies because agriculture is drastically affected and the farmers are losing their lives and livelihoods.

Today Indian farmers and the farming system are in deep crisis. It is threatening to deepen further as a result of the removal of Quantitative Restrictions (QR's) under the EXIM Policy of 2000-2001 and 2001-2002. The Financial Budget for 2001-2002 tried to "safeguard the interests of Indian producers" by increasing the duty on only 6 agricultural items out of a total of 1428 items from which QR's have been removed in the last one year. The prosperity that globalization was supposed to spread is fast proving to be elusive. Impact of trade liberalization and globalization is ruining the farmers of every state and the worst affected are the states of Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Kerala. They are facing the maximum burden in terms of paying for globalization by being forced to sacrifice their lives and livelihoods. Thousands of farmers are committing suicides and selling off their kidneys to pay back their debt. In fact, Punjab has left behind Andhra Pradesh in the notorious distinction of farmers' suicides. The farmers of Punjab were burdened with a total debt of Rs 5,700 crore in 1998, according to Professor Shergill of Punjab University. It is the debt burden which is the main reason for farmers' suicide in Punjab. The impact of globalization coupled with the wrath of drought has badly affected the farmers in the states of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Orissa.

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However, instead of addressing this situation in any serious manner, the National Agricultural Policy tries to worsen the situation by advocating for the corporate control and corporatisation of India agriculture, withdrawal of subsidies to the farmers and its redirection to the corporates, open market for all agricultural goods to be dumped on Indian soil at the cost of Indian producers, biodiversity conservation to facilitate intellectual property raj for seed companies and gene giants at the cost of farmers who will lose the rights to save seeds and the Indian researchers who will be denied to do independent research to breed new varieties and so on. The Financial Budget and the EXIM Policy 2001-2002 have followed the line adopted by the Agriculture Policy and have tried to further its wishes and desires. The Agricultural Policy, the Financial Budget 2001, and the EXIM Policy 2000-2001 have been designed to further the interests of the big corporations and are not for the Indians.

National Agricultural Policy: A list of Wishes

The National Agricultural Policy was presented to the Parliament in July 2000. The Agricultural Policy is a supine surrender to the WTO-sponsored strategy of integration of Indian agriculture with the global market. In fact, it is a long list of wishes.

It speaks of all things and everything ranging from achieving a high rate of growth exceeding 4% per annum, conservation of biodiversity equity across regions and farmers' watershed development, environmental protection, harnessing of traditional knowledge, regionalization of agricultural research, research and extension linkages, encouraging research and breeding of new varieties in private sector through protection of plant varieties, technology diffusion, liberalization of domestic market, integration of agricultural trade in the global system, tenancy reforms, development of lease markets, enabling lease of land for agribusiness, contract farming accelerating the growth of agri-business, creating employment in rural areas, women's rights in land, promotion of cooperative form of enterprise, price support, crop insurance, use of information technology, and many other matters.

A Policy document is not expected merely to enumerate multiple objectives. It must analyze the possible contradictions or conflicts arising out of the pursuit of multiple objectives, indicate the strategy for resolving or mitigating such contradictions and conflicts, prioritize the objectives, and outline a broad approach to a plan of action.

The national agriculture policy, the first after Independence, comes at a time when there are disturbing signs of a declining trend in foodgrains productivity, fast emerging barriers to sustainability of agriculture, depleting underground water resources, and growing indebtedness in farming. In the recent past, hundreds of farmers have committed suicide in various parts of the country.

For nearly a decade, agricultural production had stagnated. The spectacular growth recorded in the post-Green Revolution years in Punjab and Haryana have receded into history. Among the multiplicity of problems confronting agriculture, rapid fragmentation of land holdings is keeping pace with increasing population. In 1976-77, the average size of the holdings was estimated at two hectares, and in 1980-81, it came down to 1.8 hectares. Today it stands at a mere 0.2 hectares.

It is very impressive to talk about a growth rate exceeding 4% but the recent history in this respect is very discouraging. "The growth rate for all crops taken together decelerated to 2.3% per annum during the period 1990-91 to 1997-98 compared with the rate of 3.5% per year during the earlier period 1980-81 to 1990-91." More serious, "yield growth for all crops together decelerated from 2.65 per cent per annum during the 1980s to 1.38% per annum during the 1990s, the growth rate for rice decelerated from 3.21 to 1.27 and for wheat from 3.15 to 2.32% per annum. This is a serious development which has arisen as a result of neglect of public investment in R & D and extension in agriculture. But with the withdrawal of the role of state from major activities of economic planning and investment and, moreover, a greater dependence on private sector research, the growth rate of 4% per annum amounts to nothing but wishful thinking.

The National Agricultural Policy states that "agriculture has become a relatively unrewarding profession due to generally unfavorable price require and low-value addition." However, it fails to point out that collapsing prices of agricultural commodities are a result of globalization that has allowed dumping of subsidized import with the removal of quantitative restrictions. The farm economy is becoming negative for producers because liberalization has also led to rising costs of production due to rising of inputs due to removal of subsidies for inputs and deregulated markets. Rising production costs and declining prices are pushing farmers into debt and suicides, while the corporations which sell inputs and buy produce are showing increasing profits.

For millions of farmers languishing in the drylands, constituting more than 70 per cent of the cultivable lands, it continues to be a futile struggle. That the drylands produce about 42 per cent of the country's food shows that the future of farming lies in these areas. Nearly 83 per cent of sorghum, 81 per cent of pulses, and 90 per cent of oilseeds grown in the country come from these areas. One year of drought is enough to push a farmer into a deep well of poverty for another two to three years.

At a time when food production struggles barely to keep pace with the burgeoning population growth, farmers are being asked to diversify, produce crops that are suitable for export and to compete in the international market. With the promise of cheap food available off the shelf in the global market, the focus has shifted from agriculture to industry, trade and commerce, from the small and marginal farmers to the agri-processing companies, which alone can bring in investments and add value to produce.

The cultivation of staple food is being replaced by cash crops, tomatoes in place of wheat, durum wheat (for bakery purposes) is replacing wheat as a staple diet in Punjab and Haryana, flowers in place of rice and so on. In Kerala, vast tracts of forests and paddy fields have been converted into rubber, coffee, and coconut plantations. The structural transformation is not only peculiar to Kerala, it is happening in almost all the states. With agricultural minister Nitish Kumar being keen to legalize the process of corporatisation of agriculture, he is sure to strike a deathblow to Indian agriculture. Private investments and that too adhering to "environmental non-degrading and socially acceptable" norms is not possible. However, what the agriculture minister further states and which is very true is that the "policy is compatible with the imperatives of economic liberalisation and globalisation."

In order to promote corporatisation of agriculture, the policy says that "the private sector participation will be provided through contract farming and land ceiling arrangements." This clearly means undoing of the land reforms. This is fraught with dangerous consequences for 70% of landholders who are small and marginal farmers. They would be reduced to the status of landless labourers, with the difference that they would be left only with a piece of paper issued to them in lieu of the lease by the big corporate farming entity. It will reduce Indian farmers to bonded labour, robbing them of their autonomy and sovereignty. It will also threaten the food security of the country.

The policy also promotes the use of biotechnology for "evolving plants which consume less water, are drought resistant, pest resistant, contain more nutrition, give higher yields, and are environmentally safe." However, applications such as less water consumption and drought resistance have not yet been realised through genetic engineering, though farmers' varieties give a tremendous choice for drought resistant varieties.

Claims to pest resistance as in the Bt Cotton currently undergoing field trial are also false. Bt crops are a guarantee for creating super-pests and threatening friendly species due to the production of toxins by the plant. The claim to higher nutrition as in the case of vitamin A rice ignores better, safer options of providing vitamin A through diverse foods or as a supplement.

The myth of higher yields of genetically engineered crops has also been repeatedly exposed as independent studies show that data from the biotech industry was fabricated and yields are exaggerated. The policy has clearly been written for corporations like Cargill—the Grain Giant and Monsanto—the Gene Giant. It has not been written to address the silent emergency the Indian farmer is facing.

Such a policy will play havoc with Indian agriculture. After all, what has not been understood is that any tinkering with the agriculture sector that encourages farmers to abandon their land and move to cities in search of a livelihood is sure to lead the country into a dark abyss.

It was not a mere coincidence that the document on National Policy on Agriculture has made appearance at the time when the negotiations to revamp the Agreement on Agriculture (AOA) was about to commence in WTO. The unstated but the main purpose of the policy is to subordinate the last bastion of the Indian national economy to the designs of global capitalism.

Removal of Quantitative Restrictions: Doom for Indian Agriculture

Though not required under AoA or the WTO, India removed the quantitative restrictions from 1429 items from 1st April 2000 to 1st April 2001. QR's from 714 items has been removed under the Export and Import (EXIM) Policy announced in New Delhi on 31st March 2000. And on 31st March 2001 QR's from the rest of 715 items (actually 751 in the notification 2 of 31st March 2001) have been removed, making India a dumping ground for cheap, subsidised agricultural and dairy products including offal, carcasses, and half carcasses.

The agricultural situation in India became worse with the removal of quantitative restriction and because of the flooding of subsidised products in the domestic market. Since our farmers have continued to be denied of price support and procurement subsidies, the situation is going to be worse because no solace has been provided under the latest budget to deal with the surge of imports.

QRs were being maintained ever since 1947 on balance of payments (BOP) grounds under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) to which India was a signatory. India participated in the 7-year long Uruguay Round Negotiations (1986-1993) which culminated in the signing of the Uruguay Round Agreement in April 1994 and became a founder member of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which came into being in January 1995. India subscribes to all the WTO Agreements, but continues to maintain QRs on BOP grounds as per the provisions of Article XVIII-B of GATT. Till 31st March 2000 the quantitative restrictions were maintained on balance of payment ground on 1429 items out of which 700 items were under Restricted List, 685 items were under SIL (Special Import License) list and there were 44 items under Canalised list. In April 1999 about 1285 items were already shifted to the open general license (OGL) list.

According to the commitment given by India to the developed world, we had time till 2003 to remove all quantitative restrictions. This commitment had been accepted by countries like European Communities, Japan, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland. But on 28th December 1999, India entered into a secret bilateral agreement with US and consequently, removed Quantitative Restrictions from 714 items on 1st April 2000 and from 715 items on 1st April 2001.

A large number of these items are agricultural and dairy products. With the removal of QR's Indian markets are open for dumping of highly subsidised products from USA and other developed countries forcing

domestic producers to ruin, despair and destitution. The excessive imports of edible oil have ruined the domestic producers of oilseeds, especially mustard, soyabean, groundnut, and coconut. The mustard seed prices have fallen sharply and this has affected the mustard seed production. In comparison to last year, there is a sharp decline in acreage and production of mustard seeds. The worst has happened with coconut in Kerala where its prices have fallen by one-third since last year. Besides coconut, other crops are also reeling under the fall of prices in every state. The prices of coffee, tea, rubber, pepper, and arecanut have fallen sharply in Kerala, vegetables prices have plunged in Karnataka, prices of paddy have fallen across the country forcing farmers to sell much below the minimum support price (MSP). The Financial Budget for 2001-2002 is totally silent on policies to prevent the collapse of farm prices. The sharp fall in farm prices of agricultural commodities was further worsened by the withdrawal of support by the Food Corporation of India (FCI).

The dairy products are not untouched either. Prices of milk and milk products have fallen in Punjab where majority of small and marginal farmers' survival is based on dairy. The farmers are being forced to sell their livestock. Last year in the Barnala animal market, more than 100,000 cattle were brought for sale which is four times more than what used to come earlier. Due to the threat of cheap import of chicken, the prices of chicken have also fallen by 40%.

With the removal of QRs the Indian producers are thrown into an unequal, highly subsidised and volatile international market for agricultural products. Despite having a "comparative advantage" on selected items, it is very difficult for Indian producers to compete at the international level and simultaneously destroying the domestic products by allowing heavy influx of cheap imports. Even tariffs levied on the import of agricultural products are not high enough to protect our domestic producers and the efforts of the Finance Minister to increase the tariffs on half a dozen agricultural items referred to as "safeguarding the interest of our farmers" would not be of much help. The effective customs duty on wheat is 50%, while on broken rice the duty is 0% including cereals like rye, oats, and barley. Though the duty on edible oil is increased to 75%-85%, yet on soyabean oil, it is 45% and on crude soyabean oil it is only 35% which is very low.

However, according to India's proposal to the WTO on Agreement on Agriculture (AoA), the average tariff in OECD countries in 1993 was 214% for wheat, 197% for barley, and 154% for maize. In certain commodities the tariff peak reached 300% and above. In EU the out-of-quota tariff for bananas is 180%, in Japan these tariff range between 460% and 600% for dried beans, peas, and lentils, in US groundnuts have a tariff of 164%. Recently, Japan has levied a tariff of about 1000% on rice to protect its domestic rice producers. The Indian proposal makes a demand for the ongoing review of the Agreement on Agriculture, that too as special and

differential measures, the developing country members should be allowed to maintain appropriate levels of tariff bindings keeping in mind their development needs and the high distortions prevalent in the international markets. Yet the Financial Budget for 2001-2002 made a very dismal effort to raise the tariff marginally of hardly half a dozen items as "safeguard mechanism" for domestic production against highly subsidized and cheap imports of agricultural products from developed countries.

If industrialised countries have high agricultural tariff to protect its producers and if India is arguing for high tariff in the Third World, our Budget should have reflected this position of high tariff duties. Instead, the Finance Minister maintained the effective duty on wheat at 50% on broken rice, rye, and barley at 0% and a marginal increase for edible oil except soyabean oil with very low at 35%-45%. The ratio of imported soya oil is increasing and it is expected to be dumped in large amount in India from USA, Brazil, and Argentina, with the increase in duty on other edible oils, especially palm oil. In these countries mostly the genetically engineered soya is grown and the soya oil which will be imported in India from these countries will be contaminated with genetically engineered soyabean. Most of the European countries and even Thailand have banned the import of any genetically engineered foods and in this case India would be the right market for dumping the contaminated soya oil. But in India even our PFA departments and the Rules are not equipped to check the hazards of the genetically engineered foods.

With the removal of QRs we are being forced to import the hazardous foods and meat products, contaminated with Mad Cow and foot and mouth disease, including their carcasses and half carcasses, and slaughter house wastes (offal's) of sheep, poultry, pigs at a very low customs duty. The Budget paid no attention to increase the customs tariff on such items which would spread health hazards and threaten the public health, besides contaminating our environment and spreading these diseases in our livestock. On the other hand, the Europeans have refused to import hormone beef from the US in spite of a WTO dispute ruling and in spite of US trade sanction. Now with the removal of QRs, all these will be dumped in India. Therefore it is imperative that we re-impose Quantitative Restrictions to save our farmers and our agriculture.

India should not fear about trade sanctions because no trade sanction could do more economic damage than the destruction being caused to India's economy by the removal of QRs. Implementations of WTO rules have become more costly than non-implementation. If Europe and the US can impose QRs according to their domestic interests, why shouldn't India?

The Financial Budget 2001-2002

The crash in the prices of agricultural commodities due to the surge in imports had put a lot of hope on the Financial Budget to come to the rescue

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of the domestic agricultural producers by raising the customs duty on imports of agricultural items. But the Finance Ministry Budget for 2001 raised customs duty on barely half a dozen items avoiding to annoy their mentors in Washington, D.C. and Geneva, keeping aside the interests of our farmers and putting at risk the food security of the country and lives and livelihoods of domestic producers.

Besides the failure of the Budget to increase tariff on agricultural products to protect our producers from imports, the Budget made it official that the Indian agriculture is being planned and managed as an investment sector for global agri-business, furthering the interests of multinational corporations for the corporatisation of agriculture, ignoring the livelihood security for millions of farmers and food security of the one billion people.

The Government has taken no steps and made no commitment through the budget 2001-2002 to protect farmers and the national food security.

Instead of ensuring that farmers get a fair price for growing food staples and the country's food security is not compromised, the Finance Minister has announced excise exemption for the food processing industry. Thus support for farmers is not forthcoming, but corporate subsidies for food giants like Nestle, Lever, Coca-Cola, and Pepsi are expanding.

The budget has called for speeding up agricultural reforms and better management of the food economy. However, what has been proposed are reforms aimed at corporate takeover of the food economy.

While farmers are not getting adequate return on producing food staples, the foundation of India's food security, because of withdrawal of minimum support prices, and consumers are being denied access to food at fair prices on grounds that subsidies must be withdrawn, the budget has offered new and enlarged subsidies to the corporate sector. These include:

- ★ Enlargement of the Rs 78 crore subsidy for setting up cold storages and reduction of interest rates from 10 to 5 per cent for cold storage. It is misleading to suggest as the Finance Minister does in his budget speech that: "this scheme will enable small farmers to enhance their holding capacity in order to sell their product at remunerative prices. . . . Small farmers will particularly benefit from this scheme by avoiding distress sales."

Traders run cold storage plants, not small farmers. Small farmers still sell in distress even when cold storage plants are set up, especially if they have been enticed to shift from grains to fruits and vegetable which are perishable. The Rs 38 crore scheme for horticulture in Northeastern states will make farmers there more prone to distress sales of farm produce.

- ★ The Budget also allocates Rs 6000 crore as institutional credits through Kisan cards. Kisan cards indicate the borrowing power of the farmer based on his assets. But the farmers of Andhra Pradesh have an experience of Kisan cards where the borrowing limit is so

measly that the card holder will have to go back to the private money-lenders. According to the Andhra Pradesh All Indian Kisan Sabha, the total credit requirement for Andhra Pradesh alone is Rs 15,000 crore and what Mr Sinha has offered is merely Rs 6,000 crore for the whole of India. Hence Kisan cards are not of much use to farmers driven by into debt and displacement by artificially low farm prices.

- ★ The Finance Minister announced a budget outlay of Rs 8,729 crore for roads. In addition, the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana for Rs 2,500 crore for “rural connectivity is more a subsidy for trading interests to reach rural areas, than rural communities to have markets. When prices collapse due to the removal of Quantitative Restrictions or withdrawal of FCI from procurement, markets for rural producers disappear. Fair prices for agricultural produce is what rural producers need, not super highways. Since all highways pass through rural areas, all highway projects can qualify as rural roads. The 50 per cent less on diesel earmarked for rural roads is therefore also a corporate infrastructure subsidy.
- ★ The budget does not talk of the number of villages without water, schools, health centers, but picks on the 80,000 villages without electricity. The Rs 750 crore for rural electrification will not bring electricity to rural homes if privatisation of state electricity boards makes electricity costs shoot up as it did in Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra.
- ★ The statement on the management of the food economy, “Our policy has to be transformed to deal with surpluses rather than shortages” is also an indicator that the food policies are not being made for the 300 million Indians who are hungry and the millions in Orissa and Rajasthan facing starvation deaths. The budget speech referred to the fact that: “the present arrangement of Government of India procuring foodgrains and States managing the PDS has led to many problems while the subsidy has increased from Rs 8210 crore to Rs 12,125.”

The high costs of procurement and high costs of subsidies for food distribution that were referred to in the budget speech are directly related to the high costs of external inputs of the Green Revolution and high costs of storage and transport in a centralized food system.

The government has now proposed that it will hand over procurement and distribution of foodgrains to the private sector. Reform of PDS can go a long way in correcting the imbalances of the high cost, centralized Green Revolution model. However, a decentralized food security system would require a decentralized, sustainable, small farmer centred agricultural policy backed up by a strong decentralized and diversified food

procurement and distribution system. This is not what the government has proposed. Its proposal is that instead of providing subsidized foodgrains, financial assistance will be provided to the State Government to enable them to procure land and distribute foodgrains to BPL families at subsidized rates.

This raises a number of questions. Firstly, the Government has been unable to find the BPL beneficiaries in spite of three years of reform. In Delhi, no one has been issued a red card for the BPL category. There is also a major uncertainty about who are the poor. The Central Government says poverty has gone down from 15% to 8% in Delhi. The Delhi Government says that it has gone up from 15 to 17%. Since the BPL families are proving elusive for the government, a procurement policy based only on the uncertain, ill-defined BPL category could lead to a situation where there is hardly any government procurement. In any case, this policy has in effect dismantled a public procurement system and has tacitly handed over procurement to multinationals like Cargill. The withdrawal of government from procurement and hence the withdrawal of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) will push farm prices down. In Punjab the farmers had to do protests and dharnas for several days to force the government to procure their grains. In the last paddy season those farmers who had sown early paddy variety called Govinda had to sell it at 300-325 per quintal against the MSP of Rs 540 before the government announced to procure it at MSP. The farmers of Andhra Pradesh and all other states faced the same. With the government decision to withdraw from procurement the producers will face the similar situation despite MSP announcement because the private traders and corporations will never pay the MSP price because they are not bound by it. Hence the government policy engineered low prices are in fact a hidden corporate subsidy to grain trading companies.

- ★ The low prices farmers are receiving due to globalisation pressures is the real farm crisis. This is due to deregulation of movement for foodgrains. Instead, the Finance Minister has announced abolition of the Essential Commodities Act and removal of all regulations on movement and storage. Private companies now have a right to hoard. They now have a right to flood markets in one region with low priced commodities brought in from abroad or other regions and drive markets further downwards. This is why Orissa, Andhra, and Bihar objected to Punjab rice being dumped in their markets. The freedom to hoard serves traders and corporations. Regulation on stocking and movement serves both farmers and consumers since farm prices cannot be pushed down limitlessly and consumer prices cannot be pushed up unreasonably.

Since the reform process started, there is a growing polarization between prices farmers receive and prices consumers pay. From a 5-7% difference

this price polarization has jumped to 40-50%. It is therefore not true that "restrictions on movement and stocking of foodgrains and agricultural produce is acting as a disincentive to farmers."

The dismantling of Essential Commodities Act and the removal of all regulation on movement and storage will lead to the "trade-raj" situation which caused the Great Bengal Famine of 1942. The Essential Commodities Act was designed to ensure that such famines are not repeated in Indian history. The removal of the policy instruments like the Essential Commodities Act that have prevented famines from occurring in independent India is a dismantling of India's food security system.

The way Indian government is adopting policies for Indian agriculture force to believe that they are working to fulfil the American dream who had wanted the world's second biggest agriculture economy to forgo its inherently applicable policy of self-reliance in agriculture and gets completely dependent on the US for foodgrains.

But such policies will play havoc with Indian agriculture. It seems our political leaders have failed to understand that any tinkering with the agriculture sector that encourages farmers to abandon their land and vocation is sure to lead the country into chaos, dependence, and slavery.

Caste as the Basis of Political Parties

ALTHOUGH THE CASTE system has been prevalent in India for more than three thousand years, no one knows for certain where or how it originated. Some people attribute its origin to the Aryans. But historians speak of a three-layered social system in all the major river valley civilizations of the ancient world. If this is true, the Aryan origin of the caste system is to be put into doubt. One is led to ask oneself if the Aryans might not have used a prevalent social system by putting themselves on top of it as military conquerors and priests, and if the outcastes might not simply have been a group or race of prior settlers whom both the Aryan and the pre-Aryan immigrants did not want to integrate into their rank and file on account of their colour, enslavement, and dispossession.

Whence the caste system is a question only of historical interest and curiosity? A more purposive question would be: whether the caste system? This approach will take us beyond the theories of whether or not casteism is a form of racism to the pragmatic level of what we do and what we can and should do constructively with the caste system.

Whether racist or casteist in origin, discrimination and denial of human rights, dignity, and equality is a fact of history and contemporary experience. In the face of facts, arguments are escapist, whether they stem from the government or from social activists and theoreticians. They are not pragmatic. Pragmatism is a matter of praxis or what we do with the issue on hand. The practical question then is what we do and what we should do with the caste system.

The fact, whether we like it or not, is that all of us, whether caste-ed or casteless, are using the system to our personal and collective advantage. Our ruling socio-political system offers benefits to the casteless because of past discriminations and denials of opportunity. It also profits the caste groups by offering them the benefit of belonging to the class of backward or most backward castes. The advantage seems to be so attractive that all castes compete for the backward or most backward status classification.

This is the reverse social mobility peculiar to our unique culture, which differentiates Indian and Indians from the worldwide sociological trend of upward social mobility. Surely something is rotten in the state of Denmark!

A worse case of rottenness is the way all our political parties and politicians use and abuse the caste system to personal and collective, that is to say, party advantage by breaking up the unity which has existed at least on the basis of castes. Can a polity that breaks up social unity build up national unity and consensus? Social disintegration and national integration are contradictions in concepts and practice. This is one of the reasons why we have been talking since 50 years about national integration, without realizing it. And the more we talk of it, the more its reality seems to elude us. But we continue to delude ourselves with experiencing or having experienced it, because we talk and can talk about it. For us Indians, this word is identical with, and is not just a sign or symbol of, reality. Hence too our pretension to having the status of the moral and spiritual teacher of the world, without setting our own house in order. It is the money and power elite of all parties and castes, especially of the upper rungs, who get the political advantage of contesting elections by using their own and the majority population's caste and in contesting for jobs in the Government. Thus contradiction and injustice are built into the socio-political economy in its operative manifestations. Caste contends against caste, and individual against individual, for the sake of the same positions that all aim at and cannot get. Can national integration be built on social injustice?

The most poignant and ironic self-contradiction of all is the pretension of our polity. Politicians, educators, thinkers, and social activists all claim that their handling and thought-patterns are above and beyond communal considerations or prejudices—whether based on region, religion, language, or caste. If only we could inject a little honesty, transparency, and the right type of consistency into our thoughts, words, and actions, our polity, society, culture, and economy would be transformed into one of the best models for the world that we seek to be. And the world would take us at our word, instead of laughing at us as pretentious, as it does now.

We all pretend to disown caste, while enjoying its systemic benefits and seeking to get more and more of them to the exclusion of others from them. This dishonesty is built into our political economy as well as our day-to-day social interaction. Even our great men may not have been free from it.

When Dr Ambedkar won the McDonald award for a separate electorate for the Depressed classes after the Round Table Conference, Gandhi played the Hindu religious nationalist politician over against the caste communal politician by opposing the "vivisection of Hindu India" with his life through his fast unto death. Thereby he forced the hands of the caste-communal, nationalist politician, Dr Ambedkar, to sign the Poona Pact. In yielding to Gandhi's pressure, Dr Ambedkar compromised the redemption—promising

key to India's socio-political salvation—namely the political organization of the country on the basis of its caste-communal diversity.

When Ramasamy Naicker ushered in the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu, he played the negative communal key against Brahmin domination in Congress politics and in Hindu religion and society. To the extent he identified the caste system as Aryan or Brahmanical in intent, he also missed the key to the social and political reorganization of Tamil Nadu in particular. The party or parties, that owe their origin or at least inspiration to him, are doing nothing different from any other party in the fragmentation of the caste identities. Is national identity built on the tomb of its social identities?

The gist of our social history is that India has from the time of its Independence been playing an unnatural game of building its polity on the sand of ideas that were and are alien to its social system. And that is why it has petered out without success, and the caste system has held its undiminished, though not yet fair, sway. There are injustices and indignities built into the caste system. They called for, and still call for, reform, recognition, and personal ownership with pride and without shame from and by one and all. But one and all can own their caste with pride and without shame, only when the injustices and indignities built into it are removed. And this cannot be a matter merely of social or religious reform. All our social and religious reform movements since the Buddha, through Christ, Mohammed, the Bhakti movement, Guru Nanak and Gandhi, have all failed in this respect, because they were lacking in political teeth and did not take to political action, by owning, recognizing and working on the political substance in the caste system. How could this be done now?

Opportunities missed earlier in our long history need not be missed and lost forever. We can make up for lost time and opportunities by learning from them and correcting the omissions and mistakes we have made. We can do it only if we are true to ourselves and have the courage to speak that truth without loss of respect to the leaders of our past.

If Gandhi missed a golden opportunity for India in the Round Table Conference and the McDonald's Award, Dr Ambedkar missed one at the Constituent Assembly. His distrust of the caste people was as great as his knowledge of and confidence in some foreign Constitutions, that he led the Constituent Assembly into modelling independent India's Constitution on that of foreign lands rather than on the country's own social institutions. He did not believe reform are possible within the caste system. The fact of the matter is that his trusted foreign-modelled Constitutions have not effected the reforms either.

Ambedkar was particularly opposed to the panchayati raj system of local self-government, as he saw caste prejudice strongly entrenched in the rural areas against the Depressed Classes. Hence he worked out a system of people's representation by strangers in remote State and Central legislatures, hence not really responsible to, nor recallable by the people,

the people themselves being even grater strangers to their own representatives. Gandhi's idea was one of popularly elected panchayati raj institutions at the base, followed up by indirect election of representatives at the district level, and so up to the State and central legislatures. Ambedkar's concern for the Depressed Classes meant denying to the country at large what Gandhi had denied to the Depressed Classes. Both the country at large and the Depressed Classes or the Dalits, as they are otherwise called, are all the poorer for it.

Better late than never, I personally approached Mrs Indira Gandhi within weeks of her declaring the state of Emergency, with the idea that a national democracy would be real, only if representative forms of government were real in the villages and hamlets of India, and that the basis of representation had also to be different from that of the present-day political parties. Although she gave me twenty minutes of her time, she dismissed my suggestion as far too simplistic. Her own status then as Prime Minister, party president, and the virtual dictator, might have compelled that comment. It is a happy irony that an idea which was simplistic to Indira Gandhi was not so simplistic to her son, Rajiv Gandhi, who introduced the Panchayati Raj Bill. Still, that Bill is only a beginning. There is a long way to go before people's representation is linked to our social systemic reality of the castes and organically linked from village up to the State and the Central government. There is a revenue, judicial and development administrative linkage in the country, which is subordinate from the Central Government down to the village Munshif's level. There is no parallel or reverse-linked system of people's representation from the village up to the Central Parliament. When that is realized, India will be more really democratic than it is at present. Representative form of government will be fully real, only when all the castes, together with linguistic and religious minorities, choose their own members to speak for the community at all different levels, from the caste or community to the village, from the village to the Block, from the Block to the District, from the District to the State, and from the State to the Central Government.

Representation will have to be proportionate to the population ratios of different communities. This will also ensure proportionate share of the common goods or services to all communities. Economic and political justice will result in social and political harmony. Competition and rivalry, if any, will be of a healthy sort among individuals of the same castes, and between groups of different castes. This will contribute to individual excellence and collective as well as national prosperity. Political and economic power sharing in proportion will iron out the social differences, inequalities, and discriminations between the castes. With social equality and economic prosperity, political integration will be more experienced and less talked about. To ensure the highest freedom possible, powers will have to diminish with every remoter level of people's representation away from the locality, and be limited to the minimum necessary for the common good and safety.

These suggestions are not original coming from this writer, but are echoes of our great leaders and thinkers and events from our past. They are voices that have long been suppressed by our self-deprecatory and foreign-admiring thoughts and attitudes. They are the whispers coming from our long-suffering and much exploited caste and electoral systems.

Will the NGOs, panchayat leaders, and patriotic and reflective citizens give these suggestions their serious thought?

I. JESUDASAN S.J.

Gandhi and Development and Environment Issues

MANY GRANDIOSE VISIONS have been developed to depict how humans have shaped destiny in the new century that is already with us. These visions are based on a scenario involving highly sophisticated breakthrough with vast potentials—colonies in space, robot operated plants, computers that match human intelligence, and so on. The major question is whether such scientific and technological advancements are based on a position where man and machine cooperate with each other or has machine overpowered man? The unprecedented growth in world consumption and production is leading to environmental stress through impacts that are both global and local. Some kinds of environmental degradation are truly of global concern, such as global warming and depletion of the ozone layer. Others are international like acid rain, the state of ocean, in several countries. Others are more localised,—air pollution, water pollution, soil degradation, desertification, and so on.

The emergence of environmental concerns during the past two decades has led several people to question whether growth is worthy of the cost imposed on the environment through depletion of non-renewable natural resources. A question also arises whether poverty and environmental degradation are interrelated? What is the relation between environment and economic growth (M. Karshena, "Environment Development and Employment," in A.S. Bhatta, ed., *Environment, Employment, and Development*, p. 22). The interrelationship between poverty, environment, and development has also been recognised.

The interrelationship between poverty and environment has been recognised by the World Commission on Environment and Development Report as "poverty is a major cause and effect of global environmental

problem" (P. Bifani, "Environment Degradation in Rural Areas," *ibid.*, p. 106).

The interrelationship between the exploitation and degradation of environment and natural resources, on the one hand, and development and poverty, on the other, is particularly relevant in the rural areas of developing countries. The linkage between poverty and environment defines a particular characteristic of environmental disruption in rural areas and these linkages materialise through the over-exploitation of resources.

At the international and national levels, 1992 was a vibrant year as environmental concern, the conservation strategy and policy statement on environment and development were presented to Parliament during his period (K.R. Nayyar, "Politics of Sustainable Development," *Economic and Political Development*, 28 May 1994, p. 1328). One of the more positive approaches was the radical concept of economic 'development'. "...sustainable development as an approach to environment implies meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs" (*ibid.*, p. 327). Poor people are pushed towards the exploitation of marginal areas of low productivity, and tend to overexploit the natural resources resulting in a consequent decline in productivity. Cyclical relationship between poverty and environmental degradation takes place. As poverty increases, natural environment degrades and the prospects for further livelihood decline. Environment degradation generates more poverty. At least 500 million of the world's poorest people live in ecological marginal areas.

Another reason for environmental pollution and degradation is overutilisation of renewable resources. The use of firewood—the use of most renewable resource—is driven by expanding population. Within 40 years the amount of cropland available per person is projected to fall by half from today's already meager 0.27 hectare. Soil degradation has reduced the availability of agricultural land per capita. By the year 2050 more than 2 billion people will live in regions facing land scarcity. with extensive and increasing desertification and land degradation, particularly in parts of South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa, about a third of the earth's original forest have disappeared. Two-fifths of the world's people depend on water absorbed by the mountain ranges. But when the trees have been felled, rain water sheet oil the land, causing floods and droughts. Tens of millions of hectares of land in India have become more vulnerable to flooding as a result of deforestation.

The overuse of fertilisers causes great water pollution problems. Heavy use of phosphatic fertilisers have appeared in ground water in six districts in West Bengal, killing some of those who drink water. Nearly 30% of population of developing countries lacks access to safe drinking water. If this trend continues, the world may see a five fold increase in waste generation by the year 2025. Depletion of ozone layer is a troublesome pollutant near earth's surface. Today the ozone layer has thinned by 10% over temperate region. The ultraviolet light is also a major cause of cataracts,

which causes more than half the blindness in the world and claims sight of 17 million people every year. It penetrates surface of the sea, killing the plankton which is vital in the marine food chain.

Rapid industrialisation in many countries has greatly increased pollution. Vehicle exhaust, coal burning, and smoke from factories form small particles in the air that cause serious health damage. Air pollution from industrial emission, car exhaust, and burning of fuels kills more than 2.7 million people every year from respiratory damage, heart and lung damage, and cancer. Besides harming human health, air pollution causes direct economic losses. Germany loses an estimated \$4.7 billion in agricultural production every year as a result of air pollution, Poland \$2.7 billion, Italy \$1.8 billion, and Sweden \$41.5 billion. Polluted air drifts across national frontiers, with emission of sulphur dioxide in one country raining acid on another. Acid depositions are particularly high in industrial areas such as Southeast China, North-East India, and Thailand. The effects are felt in agriculture. In India wheat yields have been cut to half in areas close to large sources of sulphur dioxide emission.

Global warming is one of the most serious of all the environmental challenges. It threatens to disrupt the remarkably stable climate the world has enjoyed for the last 10,000 years. And it is likely to cause widespread economic, social, and environmental destruction over the next century. By the estimates, the world's harvest will be slightly reduced in this new century. A recent study predicts that harvest will decline by more than 30% in India and Pakistan. Rising seas may threaten the lives of millions in developing countries. With a one metre rise in sea level, due in part to global warming, Bangladesh could see its land area shrink by 17%, though it produces only 0.3% of global emission. Egypt could see 12% of its territory disappear under the waves.

A conservative estimate of environmental damage in India puts the figure at more than \$10 billion a year or 4.5% of GDP in 1992. That is, urban air pollution costs India 1.3 billion a year. Water degradation leads to health costs amounting to \$5.7 billion every year, nearly three-fifths of the total environmental costs. Soil erosion affects 83-163 million hectares of land every year. Deforestation, which proceeded at the rate of 0.6% a year between 1981 and 1990, leads to annual costs of \$214 million.

It should be noted that importance of renewable sources of energy, evils of large-scale industrialisation and dangers of environmental pollution were recognised by Gandhi eight decades ago, as he put more emphasis on nonviolent upliftment of village economy and the utilisation of labour-intensive techniques of production.

In modern terminology, Gandhi's strategy is modified in terms of pattern of growth, which primarily uses renewable resources and a minimum utilisation of non-renewable resources. Though concern for the environment was not the focus of such prescriptions, yet such strategy helped to minimise the degradation of environment. The environment-friendly nature of Gandhian economics is further revealed when one notes

the emphasis on the "last man." In such a policy, poverty has been described as the most severe polluter. The Gandhian prescription of "simple living" also attempts to put a check on unlimited consumption and unending exploitation of natural resources.

The eminent Gandhian thinker and economist, J.C. Kumarappa, drew attention towards these critical matters of environmental pollution and preservation of natural resources about half a century ago and exhorted that mankind should strive for establishing "Economy of perrnanence," rather than reckless destruction of natural resources. This could be achieved by a judicious minimum use of the non-renewable resources, thereby saving them for future generation and adopting a productive system in which whatever is drained out of nature is restored back through the natural process. "Work in nature consists in the effort to put forth by the various factors—insentient and sentient—which cooperate to complete this cycle of life. If this cycle is broken, at any stage, at any time, consciously or unconsciously, violence results as a consequence of such a break. When violence intervenes in this way, growth or progress is stopped, ending finally in destruction and waste... self-interest and self-preservation demand complete nonviolence, cooperation and submission to the ways of nature if we are to maintain permanency by non-interference with and by not short-circuiting the cycle of life. Whatever is drawn out of nature is to be recycled through the natural process.

Local raw materials should be processed locally. What could not be produced in a decentralised system could be produced by centralised or capital-intensive method of production. While clarifying his views, Gandhi had previously asserted that "... I do visualise electricity, ship-building, machine-making and the like existing side by side village crafts ... they should not be used as a means of exploitation of others" (*Harijan*, 27 August 1936). He also noted that "... the heavy machinery for the work of a public utility which cannot be undertaken by human labour has its inevitable place. But all that should be owned by the state and used entirely for the benefit of the people (*ibid.*, 22 June 1935). Equal distribution of income and wealth go hand in hand with proper balance between centralised and decentralised methods of production in urban and rural areas respectively for the welfare of the masses.

Gandhi's emphasis on labour-intensive techniques of production does not indicate that he was advocating obsolete machinery with less productivity. He was in favour of simple tools, which save individual labour and lighten the burden of millions of cottages. While clarifying the role of machinery, he mentioned that "mechanisation is good when the hands are few for the work intended to be accomplished. It is an evil when there are more hands than required for the works, as is the case in India. The problem is how to utilise their idle hours, which are equal to the working days of six months in the year" (*ibid.*, 16 May 1936). He was against the craze for machinery in a labour-surplus economy like India and accepted the utilisation of modern tools and implements provided they

help in reducing unnecessary human labour. He wanted production by the masses and not mass production. Here it should be noted that the adoption of labour-intensive techniques of production to create job opportunities was also suggested by World Development Report-19990, especially to developing countries. It was pointed out that "... Against the background of achievement, is all the more staggering, shameful that more than one billion people in the developing world are living in poverty. Progress in raising average incomes, however welcome, must not distract attention from this massive and continuing burden of poverty." For removal of poverty and unemployment, it was suggested that "... rapid and politically sustainable progress on poverty has been achieved by pursuing a strategy that has two equally important elements. The first element is to promote the productive use of the poor's most abundant asset, labour. It calls for policies that harness market incentives, social and political institutions, infrastructure and technology to that end ... switching to an efficient, labour-intensive pattern of development and investing more in the human capital of the poor are not only consistent with faster long term growth, they contribute to it" (*World Development Report 1990*, p. 3). It was further noted that "since labour is an abundant resource, encouraging its use is generally consistent with rapid and efficient growth" (*ibid.*, p. 56). Indian planners are not unfamiliar with these views and suggestions. They were discussed by Gandhi over eight decades ago, initially in his book *Hind Swaraj* and then in *Young India* and *Harijan* with special focus on khadi and village industries. He stated: "I have not contemplated, much less advised the abandonment of a single, healthy, life-giving industrial activity for the sake of hand-spinning. The entire foundation of the spinning-wheel rests on the fact that there are crores of semi-unemployed people in India ... the spinning-wheel is destructive of no enterprise whatever. It is a life-giving activity."

The essence of the Gandhian approach to technological progress lies in treating Nature as a friend and benefactor. This approach is opposite to what we have been practising so far in the name of technology. All decentralised technological systems which makes use of nature's in-built processes Gandhi's settlement pattern is different from our preference now. But if we take a broader view, they can become the harbingers of advancement leading development with the help of eco-friendly technology.

When the basic problems of Indian economy are analysed, the pattern of income distribution, inequality, poverty, and unemployment are still existing as they were when Gandhi advocated the spinning-wheel as a panacea for all ills. Thus his emphasis on khadi and village industries was not a temporary measure, but a permanent solution, to overcome the root problems of poverty and unemployment from India.

KAVITA Y. SUCHAK

Book Reviews

R.R. Ramchandani, *NAM and Third World Development Dilemma in the Post-Cold War Era: A Comparative Study of India and Sub-Saharan Africa*, Kalinga Publications, Delhi, 2000, pp. 315

The study of development is one of the most important fields of inquiry in international relations. There are several analytical frameworks on development: the neo-classical, Marxist, and dependency frameworks. The study of development has gone through a number of changes since 1945. In the early 1960s, the field was dominated by the neoclassical theorists. By the early 1970s, many theorists felt that the concept of development needed to be reconceptualised to address more directly the unique problems facing the poorer countries.

Professor Ramchandani's study projects the role of NAM in respect of Third-World development. He critically examines aspects of NAM, Third-World state formation, and under-development in a comparative framework of the Sub-Saharan Africa and India. The learned author throws a fresh searchlight on the relevance of NAM in the post-Cold War Third-World development dilemma in terms of liberalization and globalisation. He attempts to seek the relevance of South-South cooperation in the post-Cold War context and also analyses India's economic and technical cooperation with Africa in general and the sub-Saharan region in particular.

According to the author, there is a large gap in the literature relating to both NAM projections and the Third-World state formation in the comparative frame of India and the sub-Saharan region for identifying the effects of colonial distortions on their development processes. The dependency and underdevelopment theoretical formulations have not given adequate attention to regional variation in the Third-World regions. Professor Ramchandani, therefore, relates to those aspects of dependency theory which touch upon explaining the post-colonial underdevelopment in terms of peripheral capitalism.

The author claims that his study is a "a diagnostic exercise" to throw a fresh light on the Third-World underdevelopment problems in a comparative framework. In accounting for the post-Cold War development dilemma, the author has highlighted the shifting global development parameters and has examined some core factors that have added a sharper edge to the emerging North-South encounters.

Professor Ramchandani comes to the conclusion that even after the end of the Cold War and the emerging globalising process, the Third World is

suffering and underdevelopment continues. According to the author, globalisation has been a historical process and even Mahatma Gandhi was an exponent of globalisation and One-worldism (p. 277).

The author rightly observes that the New World Order (NWO) is fast moving towards global interdependence and there is fresh surge in the South-South perspective. NAM, which operated within the bipolar world divide needs to be reoriented. This was also the view of the leaders assembled at the Tenth NAM Summit in Jakarta. According to them, the movement must dynamically adapt itself to the currents of historic change by setting new priorities and reordering old ones and by devising new approaches and new strategies and thrash out ways and means of moving the North-South and South-South processes moving forward. The Durban Declaration of The twelfth NAM Summit also reiterated the same views. In the view of the author, India needs to relocate its role in NAM.

In his conclusive perspective, the author seems to be quite optimistic about the prospect for India-Sub-Saharan Africa economic and technical cooperation in the twenty-first century, though the author is skeptical about the prospects of South-South cooperation.

Professor Ramchandani provides a comprehensive and elegant history of the role and strategy of NAM in development diplomacy. He has ably engaged himself with hard questions of poverty and underdevelopment in the Third World and development issues in the post-Cold War world system.

B.N. Mehrish

K.D. Gangrade, *Working With Community at the Grassroots Level: Strategies and Programmes*, Radha Publications, New Delhi, 2001, pp. 444

Coming from the pen of a distinguished social scientist, a dedicated social worker, a true Gandhian, and a committed activist for the cause of community development, the book under review, is a reflection of the author's intellectual thinking and practical experiences over the last four decades on the strategies and programmes on community development at the grassroots level. It is also a testimony of the author's crusade for promoting "social work" as an "academic discipline" and a "rewarding experience." As a doyen of the academics in the field of social work, Professor Gangrade has been instrumental in establishing scores of Schools and Departments of Social work in various universities throughout the length and breadth of India and outside, and the continuing importance and need of such institutions is very much evident in the essays that are presented in this book.

The basic thrust of the book is the author's fundamental belief that through professional social work intervention, its philosophy, methods, and techniques, people can be helped to help themselves, revitalizing the Gandhian maxim of "self help" and "voluntary associations" which act as ingredients for progress and development.

The book is divided into three parts. The first part is devoted to the theoretical aspects of community work, which should enable a social worker to understand the objectives, concepts, and methods of community and Gandhian work. This will also assist him/her in discerning appropriate strategies, approaches, and programmes to be adopted in "capacity building" amongst the local people to enable them stand on their own. The second part consists of several case studies on involvement and participation of people in different projects. Each of the case studies demonstrates and examines as to why and how far the workers succeeded or failed in their endeavours. The third part comprises an evaluation of various strategies, programmes, and agencies to serve as guideline/s for improvement. The three parts of the book together not only present a thematic unity but have on the whole made an attempt to bridge the gap between professional social work and Gandhian work.

In his theoretical interpretation of community development, Professor Gangrade has taken a holistic view of the concept. According to him, "community development consists of any and all methods by which local community groups organize to promote and carry out any and all types of projects which will improve the life and work of individuals, families, and all the communities as a whole." Thus he emphasizes the importance of cultural factors, self-reliance, environmental development, and most important of all—the initiation of a process that will enable a community to overcome *apathy*, *vested interests*, and *discrimination*—as key ingredients for community development and welfare of the society. All these factors are therefore important for humanistic development.

The section of case studies is a very rich part of the book, as it very clearly demonstrates how in practice the community organizations can accelerate the process of development. Some of the many controversial and complicated case studies discussed herein relate to: (i) building of a school; (ii) completion of a school building; (iii) delivery of health services in rural India; (iv) family planning; (v) building of a community centre; and (vi) use of liquor and drugs amongst industrial workers. These case studies depict not only an in-depth analysis of inter-group relationships, patron-client relationships, and inter-caste and intra-caste relationships, but also suggest that "land" is the basis of conflicts in many of such relationships in rural India. The case studies demonstrate how students and teachers of social work can help reconcile the inherent conflicts amongst these various groups and contribute to processes of community development by providing leadership from outside and generating it from within. The case study on liquor and drug menace amongst industrial workers, which is a good

example of a rigorous use of the social-science research methodology, points out to a surprising disturbing trend that the use of drugs is more prevalent amongst student community than the industrial workers. The case study of an untouchable boy shows very clearly that no caste is superior than the other, and that we would have to rise above caste consciousness, if we have to develop and raise the standard of living of our people.

In his evaluation of the different programmes at the grassroot level, the author dwells into the phenomenon of rural-urban disparity, which represent a great divide between the masses in the Indian society. Assessing the various programmes on the parameters of human development, Professor Gangrade explodes the prevalent myth that economic development always leads to human development. Analysing the failure and achievement of the Ninth Five-Year Plan, he suggests that the impact of the planning process is to be evaluated in terms of improvement in the quality of life of the citizens, generation of productive employment, regional balance, and self-reliance, which all are the key indicators of the success of planned development. The last chapter on "Fifty Years of Freedom: Achievements and Failures," is a reflection of author's anguish and lament on the emergence of "destitution" instead of the "tryst" after fifty years of independence. This is evident from the author's observations, "that the tri-colour fluttering today instead of representing the eternal values of saffron, white and green, has been reduced to a situation where it depicts black, red and scarlet, symbolizing black money, red tape, and corruption."

The book is a commendable effort on the part of the author to bring to the attention of the coming generation of students, what may be called a "Grammar of Social Work." I hope the publishers, who have otherwise done a good job in the production of the book, will soon bring out a paperback edition for the benefit of the student community at large.

R.B. Jain

Burnett Britton, *Gandhi Arrives in South Africa*, Greenleaf Books, Canton, Maine, USA, 1999, pp. 652

The whole preface of the book is bereft of the purpose, objective, or motive of the author in writing the book under review, and that too, in long 652 pages. However, as Burnett Britton's prefacial introduction goes, it is a biographical sketch of Mahatma Gandhi who has been called "a saint and a politician" more than once. This writing is limited to the performance and interactions of Mahatma Gandhi over 1631 days he spent in South Africa, from 23 May 1893 to 13 January 1897. The four years dealt with in the book are occupied by litigations and Gandhi's taking up the cause of Indians'

enfranchisement in the British colony of Natal that saw the rise of the Mahatma. Gandhi had a span of 55 years of fight for the rights of the Indian people—over 20 years in Africa and 35 years in India. How does it complete the biographical sketch of the legend in his own life that was Mahatma Gandhi?

The reading of this book also raises another question. Despite adding exhausting anecdotes and background to the events that took place in the four years of the Mahatma in the colonies of Durban, the capital of British colony of Natal, and Pretoria, capital of Boer's South African Republic (Transvaal), what contribution does Britton's book make to the understanding one can acquire from Volume One of the *Collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi* brought out by the Publications Division of the Government of India? The constitutional set-up in South Africa (1890-1914) outlined in Volume One does not leave the reader ignorant about the stage where the drama unfolded in the book was played. Yet the work under review goes a long way in establishing that the Mahatma said/wrote "truth, nothing but truth."

Gandhi is treated, especially by the media specialists, as the best communicator in print. In literary terms, the work under review is an improvement upon his writings. Britton elevates the prose of Volume One into poetry. Britton's study also sheds light on the slant that was given to the news reporting, especially after the proclamation of apartheid as the official policy of the Boer- (Afrikaans) led-National Party government in 1948. Those writings have depicted the Boers as the evil and the English as the angels. The events and evolution of Dutch (Afrikaans) and British policies, however, reveal that the Boer (Afrikaners) are perhaps the victims of the translation of Dutch words into English. For instance, while the Boers (Dutch) stood for separate White and Black states, the English policy created a kind of *Varna* system-dominated society in South Africa. It is also important to take note of the fact that the transactions and treaties at Vienna (1815) and the British legislations taking over the Cape colony do not recognize any right of the non-White people. Britton makes a significant contribution to our understanding of the evolution in the right perspectives he has researched: "The Pretoria Convention of 1881 had conferred upon the South African Republic complete self-government, subject to the suzerainty of Her Majesty. This agreement and the London Convention of 1884 granted all persons other than natives' equal rights to travel, reside and trade in the Transvaal provided they obeyed the local laws. The Boers had substituted "all persons other than natives" for "all British subjects at the request of the (British) Crown, this eliminated a useless nationality distinction but introduced a tacit color distinction." He further points out that Article 9 of the Grondwet, or organic law, "stated blankly that there would be no equality between the coloured and the white inhabitants, either in Church or in State (p. 29). The NP-led government official apartheid policy was nothing but the end-product of the dubious British colonial

policy. "Gandhi himself was stung by the snobbishness of the Scots and Yorkshire men. He had not had a similar experience in London. He suffered the humiliation like other Indians at the hands of the English gentlemen "in the British colonies." The haplessness was aggravated by the highhandedness of the White colonists of British origin. It was the dubious policy that was protested aggressively by Gandhi and the book makes out a case as to how this facilitated the rise of a barrister into a Mahatma.

The book, a novel or a drama, as one may call it, does not deal either with South Africa or Gandhi's *karmayudh* in South Africa in its totality. It is a writing of the drama enacted in two metropolitan cities of Durban and Pretoria, capitals of Natal and Transvaal respectively. It begins with the sunny, winter morning of 23 May 1893 when Gandhi reached Durban as a "retainer" of Messer's Dada Abdoola & Company and ends on the rainy Friday, 13 January 1894 to be received by riotous mob. The "terrible ordeal" suffered by Gandhi from Wednesday, 13 January 1897 on the second arrival of Mahatma Gandhi at Port Natal ends with a letter (22 January 1897) from the wife of the Superintendent of Police in Durban, Jane Alexander, "who opened her parasol as a shield, and walked with him down West Street and [T]he [Whites'] mob gave ground and did not throw any more stones. His "renouncing" his "right" to prosecute his "transgressors greatly enhanced his prestige, as well as the prestige of his countrymen" and elevated him to be a Mahatma in the prolonged fight against the indignity and enslavement of his countrymen in South Africa and in India.

The whole drama begins with the legal cases involving Abdoola and his cousins. The cases are reported in detail with much oral evidence being reported in quotes. Which are these cases? It is of the age-old and enduring saga of Indian fratricidal struggles, the mental affliction that divides India business families to head over smaller divisions of their gigantic patrimony lawyers, solicitors, pleaders, and accountants dominate the scenes sketched in the book. Their fees are exorbitant. Perhaps they waste their resources to lose the global battle with the M&A (Merger & Acquisitions) leviathans. The Roman Dutch Law obeyed by Gandhi in South Africa, as a matter of fact all European law that is going to be all pervasive in the "global village" is so contaminious, observes the author, that it is difficult to get a settlement, much less through court, hence arbitration is the best way. Therefore the work can serve a guidebook to the Indian businessmen entering the global village.

The author also successfully brings the inner self of Gandhi in the open. In his experience, Gandhi deeply resented the reason of the colour of his skin, to laws restricting the uncivilized and primitive natives. Treatment as an inferior human being seemed to fire Gandhi with a desire to right the wrongs done to his own people. From the childhood, Gandhi had an aptitude against subordination. "Indeed I would reject all authority if it is in conflict with sober reason or the dictates of the heart. Authority sustains

and ennobles the weak when it is the handwork of reason, but degrades them when it supplants reason sanctified by the still small voice within" (*Young India*, 8 December 1920 and 27 April 1921). Thus Gandhi was not opposed to obeying the authority, he was opposed to subordination, marginalisation of the people, snobbishness etc. Britton goes deep into Gandhi's psyche and the treatment he gives to his performance spreading over 1631 days through 652 pages keeps the interest of the reader to the end. The book undoubtedly makes an excellent and usefully engaging reading.

Dharampal

Michel Danino and Sujata Nahar, *The Invasion that Never Was*, The Mother's Institute of Research and Mira Aditi Centre, Mysore, Paperback, pp. 190

The two learned authors of this small but very meaningful book are Ms Sujata Nahar and Michel Danino. Sujata Nahar spent her formative years at Tagore's Santiniketan, and she was very fortunate to have met Sri Aurobindo and the Mother at the age of nine. She had for sometime worked with Pavitra, a French mathematician and an engineer who was Mother's right-hand man in Pondicherry. Sujata worked closely with the Mother and published eight volumes of *Mother's Chronicles* which are the living expression of her thirty-eight years nearness to the Mother. Michel Danino was drawn to India and to Sri Aurobindo and to the Mother from the age of sixteen and in 1977, after having four years of higher scientific studies, started working in collaboration with the Mother's Institute of Research, Mira Aditi and Institute de Recherches Evolutives and thus participated in the English translation and publication of *Mother's Agenda* and other numerous works. He also edited some of the other works of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. For many years Michel Danino has been studying the roots of India's ancient history and some of the challenges faced by Indian culture. Currently he lives in Nilgiris and is involved in nature photography and forest conservation and has also written two important and valuable volumes titled "Sri Aurobindo and Indian Civilisation" (1999) and "The Indian Mind Then and Now" (2000).

The book under review has been divided into two parts. Part one is titled "The Invasion that Never Was" and, apart from the traditional introduction, it has six main chapters.

Part two is titled "Song of Humanity" and has five sub-titles, namely "Word Formation: The Rishis;" "The Shining Helpers and Obstructors;" "The Release of Agni" and the "Sun Hidden in Matter."

While it goes without saying that Sri Aurobindo and the Mother have done a lot of pioneering work in the search and research for India, this book

has done a great service to put things into the right perspective. Since the nineteenth century, India's ancient history from Vedic times and the true content of the Vedas have both been distorted by a blinkered and unsympathetic scholarship. British rulers, European scholars, and missionaries conspired in a campaign to disparage the roots of Indian civilisation and used the groundless theory of an Aryan invasion of India only with a view to sowing seeds of division in Indian society with the main objective of dividing and ruling and also to divide and convert. In fact, even after the attainment of independence, the ruling parties have continued to maintain those British fallacies to remain in power by fair and foul means of creating vote banks among the Indian public at large. It is very unfortunate that instead of dovetailing all available resources for removing the economic disparities of the humanity at large in this sub-continent, politicians have tried to divide and rule only to have the loaves and fishes of office merely on the ground that they have made sacrifices for the cause of freedom from the British rulers. But those political leaders merely forget that it was their duty to remove the rulers so that Indians can live as individuals free from the foreign yoke.

The first part of the book examines the birth of the Aryan myth and the mususes it has bred: it takes a fresh look at the invasion theory in the light of the recent archaeological evidence, and shows how it now stands overwhelmingly disproved. The second part offers the essence of the Vedas' true message in the light of Sri Aurobindo's rediscovery of the experiences of *rishies* recorded in their pregnant hymns. In fact, the two wonderful scholars, who are the learned authors of this small publication, have given a new perspective, in which India's bygone civilization and its fountainhead come alive, rejuvenated and spelt out in the true perspective of the sub-continent. It is very unfortunate that the British rulers, European scholars, and missionaries had campaigned to disparage the roots of Indian civilization and tried to gain importance to the barbaric world of their own. The theory of Aryan invasion advanced by the redoubtable Max Mueller and fostered by Griffith, Monier-Williams, Keith, Wilson, and a host of others is indeed hard to kill as it is still found in our textbooks even if we have been free from the British since 1947. However, it is very gratifying to note that in this volume the learned author Michel Danino has killed the giant with his mathematically precise lucid arguments based on the views of renowned persons like Swami Dayananda, Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo, but also from the concrete and irrefutable archaeological evidences. The authors of this book have given a decent burial to this theory and have also laid its ghost to rest once for all. In fact, the book is readable, enjoyable, and thought-provoking in a real sense. The second part of the book is an excellent exposition of the well-known Gayatri Mantra in the most eloquent way. A reading of Sujata Nahar's beautiful, clear, and brief explanation of this famous mantra at once brings forth the full importance and potency of Vedic hymns.

The book with its brevity offers an invitation to its readers to explore more and more and to further explore the great Indian civilization which still continues to be explorable by all citizens of the world. Historians have done a lot of writing on the wonder of India. World citizens will do well to read this volume and explore the Indus civilization and to learn a lot about its hoary past. But it is time that Indians also should read and know the researches undertaken by friends from France, particularly the author who has been inspired for writing this book—part one of this volume.

J.N. Puri

Elizabeth Hoddy, *The Banwasi Seva Ashram*, Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, pp. 176

A question is generally asked: Is there any model of development following Gandhian ideas, principles, and methods?

The answer is the Banwasi Seva Ashram. It was established in 1954 in one of most least developed districts of Sonbhadra of Uttar Pradesh. The arrival of Prem Bhai and his physician wife Dr Ragini Bahen gave a new life and direction to the Ashram.

Southern Sonbhadra caught the eye of the state government and administration when it was hit by a severe devastating drought in 1952. The area was virtually inaccessible. It had no approach roads and was criss-crossed by streams and rivers. The then chief minister of UP, Pandit Gobind Ballabh Pant decided to have long-term plans and programmes by involving voluntary organisations. He invited the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi (Gandhi Memorial Fund) to take the responsibility of relief and development work on a permanent basis in the Dudhi tribal area. It was provided with 250 acres of forest land in the almost uninhabited village of Govindpur. A number of development programmes started by the government did not reach tribal people. The government evaluation reports are full of exploitation of innocent tribal people and crimes against them are on the increase. The Ashram's strategies were to follow Gandhi's dictum that people must be kept at the centre for any plan and programme. The strategies adopted were awareness and capacity building in people; in other words, to empower people. The specific steps taken were:

- (i) organizing tribal people into sustainable groups and networks referred to as community organizations (CBOs)
- (ii) employing community management approach with the Ashram acting as the facilitator
- (iii) developing and implementing programmes relating to non-formal education, health and hygiene, gender awareness, consciousness

building, entrepreneurship development, credit groups, income generating programmes

- (iv) empowering community to evaluate and assess the quality of change in physical and social environment

The Ashram with the help of other NGOs (local, national, and international) had enabled the community to plan, implement, and monitor the different programmes at the community level. The CBOs are actually implementing and monitoring the programme with the aid and assistance of NGOs and officials. The Ashram has been able to develop a good networking with NGOs and government agencies.

The structure of the CBOs has made provisions for the community to be grouped into smaller groups of men, women, youth, boys and girls, and children. Each of these groups has been channelized in such a way that they are contributing positively to the development in their own way.

The micro-credit system developed by the Ashram has been a precursor to all other community development programmes.

The Ashram's plans and programmes and their implementation since the arrival of Prem Bhai and Ragini Behan have been facilitated in five phases.

First Phase (1967-1973): This phase concentrated on land development and irrigation.

Second Phase (1974-1980): It was devoted to whole village development. The main elements of the concept of whole village development as conceived by the Ashram are:

- (a) mobilization of people for community development;
- (b) initiation of a process of sharing resources and means of production;
- (c) training of community leaders and village technicians to undertake this kind of development; and
- (d) organisation of services and technical guidance necessary for integrated community development.

Third Phase (1981-1985): In this phase emphasis was laid on extension work and experimentation.

Fourth Phase (1986-1990): During this phase attention was essentially devoted to continuing and consolidating activities started in the third phase.

Fifth Phase (1990-1996): Increasing industrialisation in South Sonbhadra brought about a multitude of changes. A number of super thermal power plants and industries did nothing to halt growing unemployment among the younger generation. Villagers could not avail themselves of the new opportunities because they lacked necessary qualifications and skills. More and more families were displaced by mushrooming industrial plants and

they had difficulty in protecting their land rights due to ignorance. Often villagers were forced to migrate to work sites where they were exploited. A renewed struggle for survival began.

The Ashram could not remain a silent and a moot observer of this situation. In response to the challenge, it immediately mounted a comprehensive, multi-pronged campaign to promote literacy and awareness as to safeguard people's interests. L.C. Jain, in his evaluation report, came to the conclusion that "the total literacy project conducted over a period of six years has brought a radical change in the educational status of the people."

Professor M.S. Swaminathan in his Foreword writes that the book helps us to illumine the path to a happy India in the twenty-first century. The work done by the Ashram shows that Antyodaya is the pathway to a Sarvodaya society where the happiness or prosperity of one is not pursued at the cost of another person's well-being.

The greatest contribution and achievement of the committed team of wife and husband has been that their head, heart, and hand were firmly rooted in Indian soil and not mortgaged to the Western ethos. They adapted programmes to suit Indian culture and specially to the tribal values. They were able to change the attitude of tribal people and empowered them to help themselves rather than to look elsewhere. The wife and husband team was broken in 1994 with the passing away of Prem Bhai. But Ragini Behan is carrying the "torch" with the same fervour. She is not allowing the spirit of Prem Bhai to die. The tribal people who had worked shoulder to shoulder with Prem Bhai have resolved that they would not allowed the fire lit by him to extinguish.

The Gram Swaraj movement, which was so dear to Gandhi's and Vinoba's heart, provided necessary inspiration and direction to this unique experiment. People interested in rural development will get a deep insight into, and learn lessons to formulate appropriate policies and programmes from this book.

The Ashram has created an environment in which everyone feels involved. They have become self-confident people and work together excitedly to achieve the dream of Gandhi to wipe out tears from every eye by love and affection.

K.D. Gangrade

K.D. Gangrade, *Moral Lessons from Gandhi's Autobiography* (in Hindi), Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, New Delhi, 2001, pp. xxiv+191

I had the privilege of reading and reviewing the English version of the book which was published in 1998. The present book is not a translation of

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the English version but a fresh attempt to present in Hindi the moral lessons one can draw from each chapter of Gandhi's Autobiography. Professor Gangrade has studied the Autobiography in great depth and has drawn lessons from each of the situations which confronted Gandhi in South Africa and in India.

From the profile of the childhood of Gandhi, the author makes a fervent appeal to the present generation to be truthful and have courage to confess one's mistakes and faults. As he emphasizes, it was because of the vows taken before his another and the promises made to her that Gandhi was protected from deviant behaviour in England.

Gandhi went to South Africa to practise law. He was expelled and thrown out of a 1st class coach of the train in which he was travelling, and it marked the beginning of the expulsion of British rule from the colonies around the world. His experiences in South Africa proved to him that soul force was greater than brute force and that hatred must be replaced by love. Truth and nonviolence became his watchwords. He organized people to fight against injustice by nonviolent means.

On his return to India Gandhi used the same methods of truth and nonviolence to win freedom for the country. Many other countries around the world followed his example to seek liberation from colonial rule.

The author has also included a lot of other relevant material for ready reference, particularly about the life of Gandhi. The Appendices to the book enhance its value. The book should prove highly useful to all sections of people, particularly the student community. I am sure it will induce them to read Gandhi's Autobiography in original.

Some time back the *Time* magazine (USA) conducted a worldwide survey to select the "man of the millennium." The top two men identified by the people around the world were Professor Albert Einstein and Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. Einstein was a physicist and a deep thinker. He made many significant contributions to our understanding of the universe. He even changed our age-old basic concepts of space and time, and of matter and energy. On the other hand, if we consider Gandhi, then he himself said: "I have nothing new to teach the world. Truth and nonviolence are as old as the hills." And yet, this lean thin and frail man changed the course of history by starting the process of dismantling the largest empire ever established in human history. On the occasion of Gandhi's seventieth birthday celebrations, Einstein wrote: "A leader of his people, unsupported by any outward authority, a politician whose success rests not on craft nor the mastering of technical devices, but simply on the convincing power of his personality; a victorious fighter who has always, armed with resolve and inflexible consistency, dedicated all his strength to the uplifting of his people and the betterment of their lot; a man who has confronted the brutality of Europe with the dignity of the simple human being, and thus at all times risen superior."

"Generations to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

The present age is dominated by science and technology. Science doubles in about a decade. We can experience this effect in our rapidly changing lifestyles. Rapidly increasing capacity of computers with their decreasing size and price, cellular phones, rapid means of transport, new technologies in healthcare are a few examples of this. A question which can naturally arise in our minds is whether Gandhi is still relevant in this age and time. It is becoming clear that unless the technological push is matched by an ethical pull, the product of our inventions and intellect may become a curse rather than a blessing.

Culturally man evolves very slowly and it may take centuries before any notable change is observed in man's nature and behaviour. This has led to gradual but definite maladjustment of man to his external environment. It is more clear in less developed countries, including India. In spite of over fifty years of independence, India appears to be sliding down with time. The only things that have advanced rapidly during these years are population, unemployment, illiteracy, poverty, crime, corruption. As Dr Ashok Mitra recently wrote: "Recent U.N. Development indices for all member-countries of the United Nations and their ratings of India vis-à-vis the rest of the world, should make our leaders hang their heads in shame."

For the country to make progress, we need leaders who are aware of the problems of the nation. Let me recall an incident. In a small group discussion in Delhi, Gunnar Myrdal, Nobel Laureate in Economics, related the following incident. He recalled that once a friend asked him to read Gandhi's writings. He told him that though he greatly respected Gandhi as a social reformer, a freedom fighter, and a great human being, he did not have enough time to read his writings. On continued insistence by his friends, Myrdal finally read Gandhi. He was pleasantly surprised to find that Gandhi was a great economist. Gunnar Myrdal went on to say that the problems of your country is that most of its economists are Western trained who do not understand the problem of the country and then try solutions which have been tried in the West and as such they do not work.

Gandhi was one man who really understood the needs and problems of the people of this country. As Jawaharlal Nehru writes: "This little man has been and is a Colossus before whom others, big in their own ways and in their own space and time, are small of stature. In this world of hatred and violence and the atom bomb, this man of peace and goodwill stands out a contrast and a challenge. He did not descend from the top, he seemed to emerge from the millions of India, speaking their language and incessantly drawing attention to them and their appalling conditions. Get off the backs of these peasants and workers, he told us, all you who live by their exploitations; get rid of the system that produces their poverty and misery. . . . Every reform that he suggests, every advice that he gives to others, he straight applies to himself."

The relevance and need of Gandhi in the present times is, in many ways, far more than it was when India was under the British rule. In this new millennium, when the world is advancing rapidly, we cannot afford to lag behind. For the natives of this country to progress, there is no other way than to follow the advice of the man who was in many ways one with them. We recall the Talisman he gave:

I will give you a Talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following recall test: Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you many have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplated is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

Gandhian literature is being produced in vast amounts both in India and abroad. The present book is unique in many ways; for, it painstakingly and systematically draws lessons from the experiments of Gandhi, so that we may all live together in peace and harmony. We have conquered outer space, but not our inner self. We have succeeded in splitting the atom, but have not been able to overcome our prejudices. We have higher income but lower morals. We have become long on quantity but short on quality. This anomaly can only be resolved by following the path laid out by Gandhi.

Professor Gangrade has done useful service to the community by bringing out this book in Hindi. I hope Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti will seriously consider translating this book in other regional languages.

L.S. Kothari

Declaration of Global Civilization

[The following is an extract from the Declaration of Global Civilization adopted at a Conference on Global Civilization sponsored by the Organization for Promoting Global Civilization (OPGC) and held in Sydney in Australia. The principles contained in this Declaration bear close resemblance with the fundamental tenets of the Gandhian philosophy and offer a lot of promise about the transformation of the world system guaranteeing peace, prosperity, justice, and dignity to all individuals—Editors].

WELL-KNOWN SCHOLARS in the scientific field, religious field, political field, philosophical field, and in the field of literature and arts from 97 countries of the world held "The First International Conference on Global Civilization" in Sydney, Australia, advocated by the Organization for Promoting Global Civilization." "The Declaration of Global Civilization" was discussed and approved in the Conference, which concerns the future destiny of our globe.

Introduction

In the civilization dominating in the 21st century, only through serious study of the problems of civilization from the angle of civilization, can we find the right way to overcome the difficulties of the world; in the globalization of 21st century, only by establishing a kind of "global civilization," can we change the human fate entirely and fundamentally.

We shall not stay at the cognition that "the 21st century is the century of cultural problems," it is an unarguable fact that we shall not be content with just discussing "world civilization," "earth civilization" or "global civilization," it will do nothing to the reality. We could also not indulge ourselves in searching the recipe for "avoiding" or "accepting" the conflict of civilization, it is drinking poison to quench thirst.

What the most urgent things we need to do is to let humans realize "what civilization exactly is," realize "that the origin of civilization conflict is within civilization itself." In another word, to "theoretically dissolve" civilization conflicts today before "actually dissolving" them. So give a thorough analysis to "civilization" theoretically and say farewell to the

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repetition of "always promoting the progress of civilization by means of non-civilization or anti-civilization." This is our aim for the creation of "Declaration of Global Civilization."

The Raising of Global Civilization

The second half of the 20th century, especially the last two decades, saw the rare cultural bond global chaos in history. In most countries or areas, law, order and belief, the presupposition of civilization, almost encountered their ends: trusts, ideas and confidence, the interior vitality of civilization, became a desert. Deep as family structure and social morality, big as government function and ideology, are all falling perpendicularly. While the activities of international criminal gangs, drug syndicate, terrorist groups and the violent clashes of different nations, religions and civilizations are soaring, the military rearrangement and nuclear force displacement in accordance with the cultural paternity and traditional identity of each country, especially large ones, and more particularly the core nation of civilization, are carried out from overcautiously to brazenly. The racist, religionist, nationalist, statist or anti-government, and race morale of the public, especially that of the young students and particularly that of the intellectual elite, which arose from regional might jointly challenging the existing world might and the secret scrambling future world hegemony, broke through the gate of ration like a raged flood and damaged the dike of conscience. . . . In one word, the spirit of civilization which has been establishing by human for thousands of years are giving way to savage, crazy and random action in many aspects. Someone sighed: "A global 'Dark Age' is falling on human beings."

It is important to diagnose dispassionately the cause of the global chaos.

The consecutive world wars draw all the nations to the international stage on the one hand; on the other hand, they brought humans into a comparatively long-lasting world peace. This is a great advantage to economic globalization and technical modernization. The storm of the epoch characterized by the economic globalization and technical modernization, in addition to dangerous drawn among the capitalist camp headed by USA, the socialist camp headed by USSR and various nationalist countries, apparently covered up the diversities and conflicts in the deep layers, culture, and tradition of nations, actually it quietly drove various civilizations into the same field of honour. As any civilization has bred-in-the-bone attraction and involuntary identification to its people, a battle is inevitable sooner or later.

In fact, before the split of the USSR and East Europe, people in every civilization committed the same mistake while confronting the wave of globalization and modernization, that is, their selection of a regressive route: "return to their nation" and "back to the native land." The sudden

breakdown of USSR and East Europe system and swift betray of Euro-American civilization not only pricked civilization, the central nervous system of every nation, but also makes the "affaire d'honneur" lack of readiness and referee, but full of arrogance without confidence. So all the problems in the global chaos possess a general characteristic: to paraphrase or to take part in the globalization and modernization in terms of their own tradition thought and native civilization. This will definitely eventuate in absurdity: to observe the "rules" and respect the ideology of their native civilization while carrying on the process of modernization. In this way, the reasonable historic difference between the common people and the reasonable historic limitations between different culture was developed into the non-civilized relationship like defending among nations and cultural solipsism by globalization. These non-civilized clashes must result in anti-civilization: people in each civilization have to trample down irrationally the world's common basic "rules"—the basic civilization spirit for a human being.

A further analysis goes as follows:

Globalization of economy is the result of modernization of technology, and modernization of technology is due to the unique characteristic of occidental civilization. Yet economy and technology are the externalization of civilization, cultures and traditions are the inner part of civilization; globalization and modernization are absolutely not equal to occidentalization. While the occidental civilizations promoting the deep-layer civilization further into the world civilization with their own logic, conflicts burst out at the deep-layers, that is, the cultural layers of the world civilization. In this situation, people at every civilization ring are trying their best to restore their civilization; some in-between nations of different civilization are seeking carefully their own home of civilization.

Let's take a look at the 1990s. The entire world is looking for "the shell of civilization" which can protect them in order to deal with the menacing conflict of civilization. Even the globalization and modernization originated from the West, however, they are not only applicable to the West, but also suitable to and be the wealth of the whole human society. This determines that globalization and modernization should not be ceased or turned back. Otherwise the shell of regional civilization, which have been carrying on for thousands of years, will no longer be a safe shelter. These factors will further aggravate the turbulence of the world.

Finding the cause of the chaos by looking through reality of chaos is merely a skin-deep diagnostic of the characteristic of the times. From a more deeper point of view, the global chaos evoked the strong disaffection and agonal perspective to regional civilization, including their native civilization, of the people all over the world. This means that *the chaos due to civilization revealed that human civilization is entering a new phase, counting on global civilization as civilization principle*. When you observe world today, you may found that at the deep-layer of chaos of various countries, quietly

grows the embryo of the spirits of global civilization in their own peculiar style. For instance, the strengthening "multi-cultural policy" in Australia, the "Singapore route" which combines both oriental and occidental values, the "American spirit" which gradually endorses human rights as the nation's first right, the "road of civilization dialogue" which opens the door of their native civilization with initiative, the quick recovery in China of Daoist spirit which symbolized by the unity of the natural "Dao" and ethnic "morality," the "Neo Russian policy" which aimed at building the Euro-Asia bridge, the UN resolution which set the new millennium as the year of "dialogue among civilizations," and so on and so forth. Although they display obvious "grouping" quality, all their intentions are to overcome the narrow-mindedness of regional civilization and directing towards the end of "global civilization."

With this comprehension, the globally fashionable theories such as "civilization conflict," "cultural localization," "cultural identification" etc., are actually routes to death although they were derived from reality. And the opposite theories of "cultural discussions," "cultural merging," "cultural innovation" etc., are merely good intentioned presumptions without objective foundation. Because it is impossible to dissolve the conflicts between different civilizations and activate real dialogues among the various civilizations with today's framework of the nations and regional civilization sphere.

Therefore, *there is only one way to survive for the 21st century human being in history: Starting from global modernization, in accordance with the common nature of human being, extracting the positive genes from the existing civilization concentrating them into a civilization which surpasses all existing civilization and applicable globally beyond epoch.* Only under the "sun shine" of this "global civilization" can we observe the common factors of different civilization, disclose the healthy and unhealthy genes of civilization, discover the safe channels among civilizations, find out the true origin of civilization conflicts and upgrade the existing civilization to a higher level.

Facing the global chaos, politicians, religionists, scholars and the public in each country appeal in one word to establish a new "world order." However, the precondition of an order applicable to the "whole world" is to establish a civilization spirit applicable to the "whole humankind," the "spirit of global civilization."

As to why we choose the concept of "global civilization" instead of "human civilization," because the latter is only a daily expression. Any kind of civilization that has been existing till today belongs to human civilization. On the contrary, "global civilization" expresses the human's hope to study civilization and promote civilization in time from the point of view of the entire humankind while distinguishing from any type of existing civilizations. We did not choose the concept of "world civilization," because either in history or in reality, the meaning of "world" is always extremely complex and much complicated. World civilization does not

imply the meaning of global civilization, but global civilization can include entirely the meaning of "world civilization" while referring to civilization.

The Meaning of Global Civilization

The word civilization has its broad and narrow sense. The narrow sensed civilization is the opposite of ignorant and barbaric. The broad sensed civilization means the nature of human life, the development of the nature of life and its externalization.

Civilization is the co-existing form of a number of different groups. Once emerged, it is regional. So far, all the clan civilization, national civilization and states civilization are essentially regional civilizations. *Regional civilization is civil, autonomous and the same time regional and exclusive. A common nature of regional civilization is that they all have the shortcomings of "non-civilization" while repelling in order to annex and assimilate other civilizations, but "global civilization" is the "civilization of the entire human beings."*

Global civilization has the following three comprehensions:

The first is its form. Global civilization is the unity of species civilization and kind civilization.

Generally speaking, Humankind is the unity of "human" and "kind." In this understanding, "global civilization" can be both in singular and plural forms. In its singular form, "global civilization" emphasizes human as a species, it has its humanity which reflects civilization. The significance lies in that we use the ideology of "species civilization," the civilized ideology that the human living in different regional civilization belong to "human" this "species," to explore the inner identity of each regional civilization. In its plural form, "global civilization stresses that "human is a whole unity" consists of numerous individuals and lots of groups, and reflects civilization from the point of view of "king." The significance lies in that we use the ideology of "kind civilization," the civilized ideology that humans not only have the nature of its animal like species, but also the nature of its "kind," moral, social, and cultural nature, to elevate the level of each regional civilization.

Furthermore, species civilization and kind civilization are in one unity. It is impossible to be a good civilization if it disrespects the animality, the instinctive desire, that is, the "species essentiality" of human species, or overindulge the "species essentiality" and disregard the sociality and cultural norms, that is, the "kind essentiality." It is impossible to be a good civilization if it disrespects the born guilt and liberty, that is, the "species law," or slide the "species law" and despise the social responsibility, moral cultivation, that is, the "kind law."

"Human are the same species" and "human are a whole unity" are the two bases of "global civilization."

Secondly, the content. Global civilization is the unity of individual civilization and collective civilization.

Basically "Humankind" is the unity of individuality and collectivity. Firstly, global civilization specifies civilization from the point of view of the individual. The significance lies in that only the ideology of "individual civilization," that is, "true civilization is good to everyone," can we judge the quality of civilization. Secondly, global civilization specifies civilization from the point of view of collectivity. The significance lies in that only the ideology of "collective civilization," that is, "true civilization is good to the entire humankind," can we judge the sphere of civilization.

Further more, individuality and collectivity is also a unity internally. If what is of "everyone's, it must be of "whole humankind;" if what is suitable for the "whole humankind," it is truly suitable for "everyone." This is the real secret of "humankind," "individual" that is, "human." The civilization performed in the human history, tribal civilization, clan civilization, patriarchal clan civilization, national civilization, state civilization, regional civilization, are all transitional phases or intermediate stages in the general progress of individual humanization and human individualization.

On the one hand, bringing individuals up to the sphere of "kind," on the other hand, enforces the power of "kind" into individual characteristics. This is the true meaning of global civilization.

Global civilization is the unity of prime civilization and big civilization.

When we look at the depth of civilization, it has three layers: systematic orders, like political, economic and social orders etc., are the surface-layer of civilization; cultural concept, like traditional, ideological and religious concept etc., are the middle-layers of civilization; and humanity comprehension of human to itself, like species, kind and individuality are the deep-layer of civilization. A civilization is the organic unification of existing order, cultural concept and humanitarian consciousness of its people. That is to say, the existing regional civilization, national civilization, communicational civilization are surface-layer civilizations that reflect the civilization structurally; traditional civilization, religious civilization, spiritual civilization are the middle-layers of civilizations that stress civilization culturally; and global civilization is the deep-layer civilization that emphasize civilization humanitarially. Strictly speaking, deep-layer civilization is also "prime civilization." "Prime" means the first, the original, and the basic. Prime civilization is the most fundamental, most common, most general layer of all in the human civilization system. It is the source and soil for political civilization, economic civilization, technical civilization, moral civilization, belief civilization, etc.

When we look at the width of civilization, it has three realms: The first is single civilization, like clan civilization, national civilization, Japanese civilization, Indian civilization, etc. The second is regional civilization, like oriental civilization, occidental civilization, Chinese civilization, European civilization, etc. The third is entire realm civilization, that is, global civilization. From this comprehension, global civilization is a kind of "big

civilization." Big civilization contains and protects middle civilizations and small civilizations, while middle and small civilizations promote big civilization. So big civilization is the basis for communication civilization, national civilization, state civilization, regional civilization, etc.

Furthermore, prime civilization and big civilization are also in unity. Prime civilization is the "holoblast" of human civilization, and big civilization is the "gerontomorphic system" of human civilization. If what is of deep existence, it must be universally applicable; if what is of general existence, it must be profound. In view of the human civilization history, the basic standard for determination judging good or bad civilization, high quality or low quality civilization, long-lasting or short-life civilization is to observe whether it embodies the unity of prime civilization and big civilization.

On the one hand, humanize the globe; on the other hand, globalize humanity. This is the subtlety of global civilization.

Yes, human's correct recognition of civilization comes slow and late. What a pity! Being human, of its kind, with ten thousand years of civilization history passed by, the power of civilization, the creativity of humankind, have been imprisoned in various barren and cramped settlements like the frame of nations, province of religion and national traditions. Only in recent years, people realized that there is a kind stuff called "global civilization" existing on the earth where we human beings have been living.

So far we get three points: (1) In the tribe centered era, tribe's interests are the paramount; in the nation centered times, national interests are supreme; *in the human unity of the 21st century, the entire interests of humankind are the highest of all.* (2) It is normal that there are distinctions and disputes among the different civilizations, but it is anti-civilization to lead distinction and disputes among the different civilizations, but it is anti-civilization to lead distinction and dispute into conflict and combat. *It is the paramount principle for the 21st century human beings to keep their conflict or combination clear from armed clashes or military alliance.* (3) All the members of human beings, black and white, gray and yellow, male and female, old and young, have the same humanity and equal dignity. *So human rights, especially the basic rights for being a human, should be the "first right" of all prime rights.* The above three points form the basic ideology of global civilization.

"Global Civilization" is the necessary outcome of global existence and modern communications. It is also the certain result of the evolution of the spirit of sages, such as Plato, Sakyamuni, Confucius, Jesus, Mohammedan, etc. The advocating of "Global Civilization" marks a new age in the history of human civilization.

It seems that "Global Civilization" is the primary part of civilization, yet it is the fundamental part of civilization as well. Human civilization has ever been diverse, and will be more diverse in the future. The diversity of civilization is the resource of human's life force and world's vitality. The

first thing first at present is how to overcome the bigotry and remove the bad gene of each civilization, ending the history of civilization annexation and civilization conquest. The civilization conquest in the old days can only destroy a kind of civilization, but the civilization wars today will end the entire civilization. Therefore, what people need most, are not the wisdom in handling civilization conflict, the large-mindedness in tolerating the contradictory civilizations, the breadth of mind in learning from other civilizations, the courage in restraining anti-civilization activities, but to change their civilization concept and raise their state of civilization, namely to learn the "primary cause," the "ABC" and "spelling rules" of civilization especially for political heads, religious leaders, and academic authorities in the 21st century.

In summary, global civilization is neither merely an "accent of love," nor just confined to "earthy care," but a civilization that organically associates "accent love" and "earthy care." Global civilization does not repel regional civilization; on the contrary, it briefly directs the current development of regional civilization from a commanding position, provides basis for dissolving conflicts, serving especially as the last safeguard in avoiding wars between different civilizations.

The Sources of Global Civilization

Civilization consists of three main factors: The first is the *view of universe* and its externalization, the second is the *value measures* and its externalization, and the third is the *goal of life* and its externalization.

In the nearly ten thousand years of the history of civilization, humans have created various brilliant models of civilization one after another in geographically segregated conditions. For instance, the ancient West Asian and North American civilization, the Indian civilization, the Islamic civilization, the Chinese civilization, the Jewish civilization, the West European civilization, the Slavic civilization, the African black people's civilization, the Japanese civilization, the American civilization, the Latin American civilization, and so on and so forth. Each civilization is formed on the basis of their understanding to the universe, value, and life.

Today, from our point of view, the above stated civilizations could be summed up into three most representative civilization systems of global significance.

The first one is the *occidental civilization*, which originated from Aegean civilization, formed during ancient Greece-Roman civilization, and completed at the modern West European-North American civilization. This is a "human-and-matter" civilization system. Its prominent fruit bears on the basis of unity of "determinism" and "non-determinism." It reflects the philosophical idea of "unity of all things."

The second is the *oriental civilization*, which originated from the yellow river civilization, formed during Confucian-Taoist civilization, and completed at the modern collectivist civilization. This is a "human-and-

human~ civilization system. Its prominent fruit bears on the basis of unity of people's natural instinct and moral standards. It reflects the value ideals of "unity of humankind."

The third is the *middle civilization*, which originated from Mesopotamian civilization, formed during ancient Hebraic-Neo-Babylonian civilization, and completed at the Jewish-Islamic civilization, which located at the junction of Europe-Asia-Africa with Jerusalem as its center. This is a human-and-divine civilization system. Its prominent fruit is on the basis of unity of corporeality and spiritualism. It reflects the spiritual sphere of "unity of heaven and people" or unity of human and divine.

The globe we are living on is round. So there is no West, East, or Middle at all. We use geographical terms to define the three civilizations, because we inherit from the traditional classification. Our aim is to generalize the components of global civilization by going deep into the analysis of the main types of civilization.

Coincidentally, the occidental civilization is referred as "blue civilization," middle civilization as "red civilization," and oriental civilization as "yellow civilization." These are the three primary colours of human civilization.

The other civilizations which can hardly be classified into the above three civilizations geographically or historically, such as the unique accomplishment of Indian civilization, the late achievement of Japanese civilization, the obscure character of South American civilization, the emerging African civilization and rapidly growing Oceanic civilization, may still be reasonably explained in accordance with the standards of the three civilizations regarding their characteristics.

What should be pointed out is that it is impossible for any one of the three systems of civilization to become the bottom colours, fundamental key or the trunk of the spirit of global civilization. If any of them was worshipped everywhere in the world as the model of civilization, it must lead to a "cultural imperialism" or cause a civilizational disaster. The above three types of civilization put undue emphasis on one of the factors of civilization and deliberately underestimate, or interpret other two factors. People today have already realized clearly the unhealthy genes of the three civilizations: occidental civilization has the genes that materialize human beings, middle civilization bears the genes that deify human beings, and oriental civilization contains the genes that alienate human beings. Considering the non-communication of different civilization, the reasons is due to the civilizations themselves, they have their own uniqueness, self-union and hence forming its unilaterality and exclusivity.

Therefore "global civilization" is a brand new civilization system that originates from, conforms to, and hence transcends over the three civilization models mentioned above. Respectively, "unity of all things entertains human with natural-corporal necessity", "unity of mankind" serves human with social-moral needs, "unity of human and heaven" satisfies the human's spiritual-belief desire. Each aspect is distinctive and has its own function.

In connection, the three aspects of civilization associate themselves with each other and is a three-in-one unity.

The wide and vast "blue sea" is the birth, bred and brought up place for humankind; above the blue sea, scattered pieces of miraculous and living "yellow lands" which are the paradise for human to amplify, propagate, and grow; over the blue seas and yellow lands is the bright and warm "red sun," the heaven that gives light, lift and leadership to humankind. Blue, yellow and red; matter, man and heaven; desire, justice and spirit; knowledge, felling and meaning; three unity stimulating each other reciprocally, splendidly and vigorously. What a picturesque scene of global civilization!

In a word, unity of all things as a philosophical idea, unity of the humankind as the value ideal and unity of heaven and people as the spiritual sphere,—the essence of the three systems of civilization, occidental civilization, oriental civilization and middle civilization—cast the fundamental spirit of "global civilization," jointly, cohesively and supportively.

Universal spirit develops human intellect and pushes it forward towards progress; it enables human intellect to use its "self-creating" ability in order to move with no interruption towards new heights and levels. It is the "Spirit that makes intellect to be an intellect" or an "intellect-transcending Spirit."

Universal spirit guides humankind's wisdom and capabilities towards a conscious and willing self-negation of the humankind; then the Universe could enter the "humankind-transcending stage" of "humankind-transcending Spirit . . ."

Buddhists can only feel Buddha, Christians can only feel God, the Islamic can only feel Allah, and the Taoist can only feel Lao-Zi. Their feelings are different and irreconcilable. But anyone with normal understanding, anyone with common sense of modern civilization can feel the Spirit of Universe, and their feelings to the Spirit of the Universe are the same.

In this understanding, we may conclude that the Unity, the same in "unity of human and heaven," is the Spirit of Universe.

The Unity of Heaven and people signifies the togetherness of Heaven, Earth, all things and all humans, integrated by one and the only Spirit of the Universe. This notion of unity implies both general unity of all things and human beings, while its deeper meaning indicates the all-embracing unity of the Heavenly nature.

We think that the Spiritual sphere of the future civilization will be based upon the concept of the Spirit of the Universe, which reveals the Unity of Heaven and people.

Conclusion

In general this theory of the "Three Unities" (Unity of all things, Unity of the humankind, Unity of Heaven and men) embraces the Unity of all things and objects in the Universe, Unity of all human beings (black and

white, gray and yellow, male and female, old and young). Unity of heavenly nature and human nature.

This holistic theory could be traced at least 2000 years back in history. Ancient sages and saints were approaching it from different angles and cultural standpoints. Among them, we could refer to ancient Chinese sages Lao-Zi and Confucius, Jewish prophet Moses, greek philosophers Socrates and Plato, Indian Sakyamuni. However, their insights and ideas had come long before the epoch which could fully claim and integrate them.

Time is changed now. Our life is no more limited by narrowness of agricultural societies, human life is integrating, our knowledge is deepening and expanding, the mature new civilization is about to come into our life and start the clock of a genuine "world history." This new epoch provides a solid foundation for the theory of "Three Unities," supplying it with sufficient objective premises and proper subjective conditions.

From the times of antiquity humans have been in search of the Truth, the Good, and the Beauty. Unity of all things is the Truth of the global civilization. Unity of the humankind is the Good of the global civilization. Unity of Heaven and men is the Beauty of the global civilization.

Both in the East and in the West, people have been in the endless search, trying to find the worthy concepts of the Knowledge, the Feelings and the Meaning. Unity of all things has the Knowledge for the global civilization. Unity of the humankind offers the Feelings for the global civilization. Unity of Heaven and men carries the Meaning of the global civilization.

From the times of antiquity, humankind has been in search of "the benefits of land (di li), the human harmony (ren he) and favourable seasons of the Heaven (tian shi)" (Translator's note: this passage refers to the fragment from the ch. Gongsun-chou, part 2 of the ancient Chinese philosophical classic The Book of Mencius: "Heavenly time is inferior to the benefits of terrain, and the benefits of terrain are inferior to human harmony"). Established Unity of all things will produce the "benefits of land," while promotion of the Unity of the humankind will realize the "human harmony," and adherence to the Unity of Heaven and men will welcome the "time of the Heaven."

Both in the East and in the West people called for Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Unity of all things is the foundation for the true Liberty. Unity of the humankind leads to the true Equality. Adherence to the Unity of Heaven and men will produce the true Fraternity.

Starting from unity of all things—all things bear the same factor of determination and counter-determination which enables synergy and co-prosperity.

Advocating unity of human being—everybody has the same quality of nature-humanism which enables coajutant and commensalism.

Tending unity of human and heaven-human and heaven inherent the same spirit of universe which enables deification and intercommunity.

These were our basic conclusions about the spirit of the global civilization.

THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE RESEARCH

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Gandhi and the Virtue of Nonviolence

Nicholas F. Gier

THE FOLLOWING ESSAY is the main chapter of a book manuscript entitled "The Virtue of Nonviolence: From Gautama to Gandhi." The book attempts to accomplish two principal goals: (i) to conceive of nonviolence from the standpoint of virtue ethics; and (ii) to give Gandhi's philosophy a Buddhist interpretation. My intent is not to foreclose on the possibility of a Hindu or Jain reading of Gandhi's work. Rather, I argue that there are some distinct advantages in thinking of Gandhi as a Buddhist. Writing to a Burmese friend in 1919, Gandhi said that "when . . . I became acquainted with the teaching of the Buddha, my eyes were opened to the limitless possibilities of nonviolence;" and he also said that the "Buddha taught us to defy appearances and have trust in the final triumph of Truth and Love."¹ Although Gandhi's neo-Vedantism is more compatible with Mahayana Buddhism, I will propose that the ethics of nonviolence works better with a Pali Buddhist view of the self and the world. This essay will focus on the first goal of explicating a virtue theory of nonviolence.

My task is not to give a full-scale defence of virtue ethics. But I have appropriated the thoughts of the best virtue theorists, have added my own insights, and have applied them to Gandhi's ethics. Some of Gandhi's ideas cannot be forced into this theoretical framework. So that means that Vedantist or theistic rule ethics are also possible options. Furthermore, Gandhi's commitment to the Indian ascetic tradition and to a Hindu dialectic of extremes is not compatible with either the Buddhist Middle Way or the moderation of classical virtue theory. Hindus are sometimes prone to, as Wendy Doniger describes it, to pursuing a Doctrine of Golden Extremes, between excessive eroticism at one end and excessive asceticism at the other.² The more contemporary Gandhians stress this aspect of Gandhi's philosophy the more difficult it will be to build an acceptable theory of nonviolent political activism that all people can embrace.

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The first section will defend the priority of virtues over moral laws, demonstrating that, drawing on hackneyed phraseology, the virtues are ultimately blind without the abstract ideals embodied in moral rules, but these norms are empty without the particular achievements of the virtues. The second section will discuss the traditional connection between virility and virtue, and, contrary to our first impressions, we will find that Gandhi completely subverts patriarchy's bias on this issue. Gandhi speaks more of vows than of virtues. Hence the third section will analyze the distinction between vows and virtues. The fourth section will summarize Gandhi's vows and will propose that they can be reinterpreted as enabling virtues. The fifth section deals with the Gandhian virtues, interpreting the unity of the virtues by means of practical reason and focusing on truth, love, courage, *ahimsa*, and humility. The final section explicates the distinction between enabling and substantive virtues, joins Gandhi's principal vows with the virtues of self-control, patience, and courage, and concludes that the virtue of nonviolence forms an alliance with these enabling virtues.

RULES AND VIRTUES

When one thinks of the question which came first—moral rules or virtues—the obvious answer, I contend, is that virtues came first. Moral imperatives are abstractions from thousands of years of observing loyal, honest, patient, just, and compassionate behaviour, just as moral prohibitions have come from equally ancient experiences with the vices. There is good evidence in favour of arguing that the expression of moral rules requires a spoken language and one could argue just as persuasively that virtues manifested themselves in prelinguistic human beings. For example, strong circumstantial evidence for compassion among the Neanderthals can be joined with the hypothesis that their very high larynx made it impossible to articulate the basic vowels.³ Michael Spangle and Kent Menzel state: "Spoken language transformed our species and was a major factor in forging the human world as we know it."⁴ They also argue for the existence of an "acoustic trigger to conceptualization" that gestural language obviously lacks. While there is now a consensus that gestures are integral to all natural languages (remarkably, even the blind gesture when they speak), it is generally agreed that they do not express abstractions very well at all.

It is even more clear that divine virtues precede divine law, because God's virtues would remain even if God chose not to create a world. The Pauline view that the Law was created only to manifest human sin further proves its contingency and confirms the idea of a "lawless" God before creation. For medieval nominalism the moral law characterizes what God has ordained (*potentia ordinata*) for a sinful world, and it is not part of God's *potentia absoluta*. Even though Aquinas maintains that there is practical as well as theoretical reason in God specifically, God would know the rule

that good always excludes evil, this argument is open to serious objections. Furthermore, Gandhi speaks of God's laws frequently and if he believes those laws are part of the nature of God, then a Gandhian virtue ethics is not possible.

Philosopher Leslie Stephen describes virtue ethics as follows: "Morality is internal. The moral law . . . has to be expressed in the form, 'be this', not in the form 'do this'. . . . The true moral law says 'hate not', instead of 'kill not'. . . . The only mode of stating the moral law must be as a rule of character."⁵ In other words, people of good character and virtue require no reminder of what the rules are or what their duty is. For John Stuart Mill, the application of internal sanctions had much more moral value than the imposition of external sanctions, those that most often used by parents and societies to control human behaviour. Mill's argument is persuasive: a society living under self-imposed vows would require few police, judges, and prisons thereby maximizing utility. Generally speaking, the sanctions for virtue ethics are internal and self-regulating, whereas the sanctions for rule ethics, especially in its religious form, are external (Kant joins virtue ethics in favouring internal sanctions). For the Greeks, the Roman Stoics, Buddhists, and the Confucians, virtue was its own reward, but for most Christians, the incentive for good deeds is eternal life in heaven, with eternal damnation for those who do not follow the rules.

One of the problems with rule ethics is applying the rules of specific cases. The imperatives of virtue ethics—be patient, be kind, be generous, be compassionate, be courageous—better equip an individual to negotiate the obstacles of the moral life. The virtue ethics approach is not to follow a set of abstract rules, but to develop an ensemble of behaviours, dispositions, and qualities that lead to human excellence and the good life. Virtue ethics may not have pet answers to specific cases—no ethical theory could offer this—but it does prepare the moral agent for adaptation, innovation, and self-discovery. As Martha Nussbaum states: "The good agent must therefore cultivate the ability to perceive and correctly describe his or her situation finely and truly, including in this perceptual grasp even those features of the situation that are not covered under the existing rule."⁶

Annette Baier's analysis of trust is a good example of the specific adaptability of the virtues.⁷ Rule-based ethics and its contractarian social and political arrangements give the false impression that the essence of the moral life consists of conforming to general rules. Obeying rules can be made specific in a legal contract, but it would of course be impossible to cover the exigencies of our lives with such formal arrangements. It is the virtue of trust that is basic to human interactions and only a few of the myriad promises necessary for the smooth running of human life could ever be spelled out in contract form. It would be not only absurd but also a great insult to plumbers (Baier's hilarious example) to "having it in writing" that they promise not to plant explosives in the pipes of the houses they visit. Again, it is the virtues that come first and they are the tools to do the

work of the moral life. As Martha Nussbaum so aptly states: "A good rule is a good summary of wise particular choices and not a court of last resort. Like rules in medicine and in navigation, ethical rules should be held open to modification in the light of new circumstances."⁸

Interestingly enough, some virtuous behaviour is not always required in cases that might call for it, while confirmation to rules allows no exceptions. For example, generous people do not lose their virtue if they do not give to all charities as a "rule to give" might command or certainly what Peter Singer requires for maximum worldwide utility. Let us imagine a burning house where a hedonic calculator is indicating that it is too dangerous to go in and save the children inside. While all utilitarians would be bound by the calculus and all Kantians would be bound by the rule that it is always irrational to go beyond one's duty, virtue theory would allow people to act on their own personal mean between cowardice and foolhardiness. Turning to yet another virtue, it is clear that even the virtue of justice always amounts to more than simply conforming to the strict letter of the law. The craft excellence of judicial review, as well as daily extralegal decisions, always lead to unique, distinctive, and non-compulsory results.

Another way to demonstrate the superiority of virtues over rules is to think of the life of the consummate couch potato (This is very apt, as I come from a state that is famous for its potatoes). He is a man who essentially lives and works on his couch. His job is entering data via a modem attached to his computer. It does not take much thinking to enter the data, so he is able to view his favourite TV shows all the time. His refrigerator and microwave oven, of course, are handy for snacks, drinks, and frozen dinners. Our sofa slug is also a very religious person. He tunes into to his favourite TV preachers on Sunday morning and sends in his tithes by mail. Finally, let us say that this man has never broken a law or committed a sin in his life. According to Aristotle, such a life lacks virtually everything that counts as human excellence; and for Confucius, this man remains very much an uncut gem. Our couch potato obeys all moral laws, but he does not aspire to cultivate the virtues of the good life. According to rule ethics and traditional religion, however, this man is fully moral, and, assuming divine favour, saved as well. Bernard Mayo clearly sees the implications of this example when he writes: "People might well have no moral qualities at all except the possession of principles and the will (and capacity) to act accordingly."⁹ This appears to be a severe indictment of any rule-based ethics.

As we have seen, the sanctions of a rule-based ethics, in its religious form, are primarily external: rewards for those who do good and punishment for those who do evil. This may lead to a mere moralism rather than a genuine morality based on internal sanctions and the view that virtue is its own reward. Most people would agree that the latter is a more admirable form of ethical motivation, and we have seen that internal sanctions

maximize utility. Most traditional religious ethics teaches us the wrong reasons to be moral. We should become moral so as to become better persons and be an example to others, rather than for the purely selfish reasons of avoiding punishment. Moral action should flow naturally from ourselves; we should not have to be bribed to be moral. Justice will not be achieved by following rules, it will only be attained, as Plato, Confucius, the Buddha, and Gandhi envisioned, by people with balanced and harmonious souls and the particular just acts that come from such harmony.

Another concern about duty ethics is the problem of legalism. True morality should be the foundation of law, and the virtues, as prior to law, would then serve as a guide and check on any law. Humans acted courageously, justly, beneficently before they laid down rules regulating human behaviour. A rule-based ethics reverses this order. It speaks of law, usually divine law, first, and moral rules come directly from the mind and mouth of the law-giver. But true morality must always serve as a check for the possibility of the working of unjust laws. If law and morality are the same, then this crucial idea of morality as the guardian of just law is undermined. For example, most of my students are able to condemn Zeus and other Greek Gods as immoral deities because of the basic intuition, central to virtue ethics, that virtue precedes law. The kind, earthly or heavenly, is not always right, and we must always guard against the false identity of the legislator and the source of the Good.

Yet another problem in the issue is freedom. For Kant a duty is whatever one is forced to do according to the moral law, and the moral will lives by the dictates of reason. This does not sound like freedom at all. If the will is truly free, it must be free from reason as well (although virtue theory steers clear of all dichotomies, it is clear that it would be a form of moral voluntarism). For Kant the consistently autonomous persons would be one who can no longer choose the wrong and must always choose the right (this seems to be the implication in Platonic ethics as well). Virtue ethics, however, is free from these conundrums of moral rationalism.

For Aristotle virtues are dispositions that we freely choose to develop, and everyday we have to fine tune the moral means that are relative to use and our situations (It is true that after a short while the virtues become habits [*ethike*], but we are still fully responsible for actions that proceed from them). Rule morality recognizes no middle way and no variation on an absolute right. Virtue ethics always aims at a personal means that is a creative choice for each individual. Such an approach engages the imagination and personalizes and intensifies moral responsibility. While there can be no process of self-discovery in duty ethics, virtue ethics requires us to confront a growing, dynamic self in ever-changing conditions. Here again, it is the reason for the dynamic Buddhist self as opposed to the universal static self of Hinduism and Stoicism.

VIRTUE AND VIRILITY

In the ancient world virtue was thoroughly gendered. There was a strong connection between self-mastery, freedom, and virility (the Latin *virtus* stems for *vir* meaning “manhood” so that Roman virtue meant “excellence of manly qualities.” Aristotle’s conception of woman as an ill-formed and irrational man was almost universally accepted. Lacking reason the woman could not instil reason in those things without it, which of course the virtuous man could (this meant that the virtuous man could control his sexual appetites, but women in general could not). Greco-Roman ethics was, according to Foucault, an “ethics of men made for men, . . . a structure of virility that related oneself to oneself.”¹⁰

Foucault also demonstrates that there was a close alliance among sexual virility, ethical virility, and social virility. The social hierarchy of virility and mastery produced interesting anomalies, such as the wife of the house being more masculine than the male slaves. Here the virtuous wife has these qualities only because she has imitated male self-mastery. Foucault gives the example of Ischomachus’ wife in Xenophon’s *Oeconomicus* who displays “masculine understanding” and is so well-trained by her husband that she, like Plutarch’s barking dog, need hear his commands only once.¹¹ *Fourth Maccabees*, a Hellenistic Jewish text, portrays the brave mother of seven boys as more masculine than Antiochus Epiphanes, the tyrant who tortures her sons to death.¹²

In both the Chinese and Indian traditions there is an intimate relationship between virtue and male power, although the *Daodejing* is one text that generally subverts male dominance. In a famous passage Mencius connects the power of *qi* energy with the virtue of courage. The retention and concentration of *qi* is a central focus of the Chinese marital arts and spiritual discipline in general. In Asia there is a near universal dictum that one who preserves his semen is the one who increases his spiritual power. In some Asian traditions it is thought that a man loses a little of his soul every time he ejaculates.

Interestingly enough, the only Hindu god who is allowed to be depicted with muscles is the celibate Hanuman, the patron god of wrestlers. Hanuman always preserves his *tejas*, the power of the male gods (*Virya*, linked to the Latin *virtus*, is another Sanskrit word for male power, with its meanings of manliness, heroism, and male seed). *Tejas* is not only an attribute of the gods and antigods (*asuras*), but it is also found in the Manus, sages, priests, kings, and ordinary men. The priest “takes on a physical form of brilliant energy (*tejas*) and attains the supreme condition . . . ;” the king is “made from particles of these lords and gods, therefore he surpasses all living beings in brilliant energy (*tejas*).”¹³ *Tejas* ebbs and flows, as can be seen in the man who breaks a vow of chastity, sheds his semen, and loses his *tejas* back to the gods. Also significant is the case of the man who loses his *tejas* by having sex with a menstruating woman, and the priest who loses his

vitality by looking at a woman "putting on her eye make-up, rubbing oil on herself, undressed, or giving birth."¹⁴ Even in their misogyny the author(s) of the *Laws of Manu* give a back-handed compliment to the power of woman.

Initially one's impression of Gandhi is that he conforms to this traditional fusion of virtue and virility. In fact, commentators have said that one of Gandhi's greatest achievements was that he destroyed the Orientalist prejudice that the West was masculine and the East was feminine summed up aptly in John Strachey's description of the Bengalis' "extraordinary effeminacy."¹⁵ Much of Gandhi's rhetoric has strong martial overtones: such as "nonviolent warfare" waged with the "masculine virtues;" and "nonviolence . . . does not mean cowardice. It means the spirit of manliness in its perfection."¹⁶ Gandhi also follows the traditional Hindu belief that the life force is linked with seminal fluid: "All power comes from the preservation and sublimation of the vitality that is responsible for the creation of life . . . Perfectly controlled thought is itself power of the highest potency and becomes self-acting . . . Such power is impossible in one who dissipates his energy in any way whatsoever."¹⁷

The young Gandhi was very much attracted to the manly virtue of the British and he was initially convinced of the widely-held view that meat eating was essential for nourishing a man's vital energies. His experiments with meat eating were a disaster and the recovery of his Hindu heritage (thanks to the theosophists in London) and his dramatic reconversion to vegetarianism were major turning-points in his life. As a result, a very different way of relating virtue to gender gradually arose in his thinking. As he reflected back on his childhood, the power of "self-suffering," modelled perfectly in his devout mother, moved to the center of his struggle to find an acceptable philosophy of political engagement. Transgressions in Gandhi's home were dealt with by self-punishment, which became the model of Gandhi's insistence on performing others' penance for them.

What the young Gandhi feared most at home was his father's self-suffering, not his punishment, and the mature Gandhi had considerable success in applying this insight against the British. As the Rudolphs have shown, Gandhi discovered the connection between self-suffering and courage in his South Africa campaigns. The virtues of patience, self-control, and courage (we will later define these as "enabling") were absolutely essential to defeat the temptation to retaliate and respond with violence. Gandhi concluded that aggressive and retaliatory courage demonstrated a complete lack of self-control; it actually shows impotence rather than manliness. Satyagrahis must purge themselves of ill-will and their goal must be to bring out the goodness in their opponents.

Let us now move to the crux of the issues of self-suffering, courage, power, and nonviolence. Gandhi made it clear that each of these virtues was found most often in women. The textual and experiential evidence is

quite persuasive: "Has she not great intuition, is she not more self-sacrificing, has she not greater powers of endurance, has she not greater courage?"¹⁸ In 1936 he declared that *ahimsa* is embodied in the woman: she is "weak in striking . . . strong in suffering."¹⁹ The women around Gandhi were amazed about how comfortable they felt in his presence and how much of a woman he had become to them ("I hope you have not missed the woman in me," he once said).²⁰ His grandniece Manu considered Gandhi to be her new mother and simply could not understand all the controversy surrounding their sleeping with one another.

Gandhi once said that he wanted to convert the woman's capacity for "self-sacrifice and suffering into Shakti—power."²¹ The Sanskrit word *shakti* is the power of the Hindu Goddess and, as opposed to *tejas*, is a necessary attribute that the Goddess shares with everything in the universe. The Hindu Goddess theology essentially breaks the vicious cycle of the Vedic maxim, explained superbly by Brian K. Smith,²² that one gains power only at another's expense. The Vedic power game, as with most patriarchal concepts of power, is a zero-sum game. Those who control the sacrifice, either by hook or by crook (with the gods dominating in the "crook" department), control *tejas*. The result is constant battles between gods and antigods, gods and ascetics, priests and kings. Goddess theology is radically different. *Shakti* is a power that all beings have by virtue of their very existence. Ontologically speaking, *tejas* is a quality (seen most clearly in its meaning as fire as one of the primary elements of the basic substance [*bhuta*]) while *shakti* is the basic substance; or, more accurately, the basic process because Goddess philosophy is clearly more compatible with process, rather than with substance, metaphysics.

The Goddess scriptures were written by men and her sacred sites were controlled by male priests, so it should not be surprising that she does not always speak with a woman's voice. In North India a husband must pay for fourteen recitations of the *Devi Mahatmya*, the most famous Goddess scripture, in order to control an unruly wife, but he only has to pay for twelve recitations to defeat an enemy.²³ A recitation of the same text may also protect a Hindu male's genitals and semen and help him get a good wife. Every year, at the beginning of the warring season, Hindu kings sacrificed thousands of animals to the Goddess so that their battles would go well. Mythologically, this translated into the Goddess winning the great victories over the enemies of the Dharma with incredible acts of violence and destruction. At the 1999 Durga festival in Calcutta, clay statues brave Indian soldiers were added to the traditional neighbourhood altars to demonstrate how the Goddess made their victory in Kargil possible.

Significantly, Gandhi embraces Goddess theology in a manner more consistent than these traditional views. The most dramatic demonstration of Shakti power was Gandhi's pacification of the Pathan warriors, whom Kipling praised as the notable exception to the cowardly effeminacy of the Indian people. "Brave they are as a matter of course," said Gandhi, "[and]

to kill and get killed is an ordinary thing in their eyes, and if they are angry with anyone, they will thrash him and sometimes even kill him."²⁴ Ironically, the Pathan's disposition to anger and uncontrolled retaliation describes the masculine version of the Goddess's action, while Gandhi's unarming moral courage in front of them is more consistent with the *shakti* view of shared power. Indeed, Gandhi's Goddess does not decapitate nor does she impale; rather, she disarms and attempts to reconcile warring peoples. Therefore when Gandhi states that "all power comes from the preservation and sublimation of the vitality that is responsible for the creation of life,"²⁵ he must be referring to *shakti*, not *tejas*.

VOWS AND VIRTUES

Even though Gandhi does speak of the virtues and even nonviolence as one, my attempt to make Gandhi a virtue ethicist is complicated by the fact that Gandhi emphasized vows more than virtues. The fact that a person has to take a vow to discourage certain behaviour clearly indicates that this person is not naturally inclined to the virtuous action that counters the vice. Even if this person is successful in her vow, she may still be virtuous only, as I say, under duress—the pressures of temptation to lapse from the vow. Gandhi believed that the greatest human failing is weakness of the will, and the taking to vows is the best cure for *akrasia*. In Aristotle's terms the person who takes a vow is an *akrates*, literally one without the will to overcome temptation. The *enkrates* is one who has sufficient will to resist but has not formed the habit of living naturally in the mean of the virtue in question. Aristotle calls the latter a *sophron*, one who, as Confucius said of himself at the age of seventy: "I could give my heart-mind free rein without overstepping the boundaries" (*Analects* 2.4).

Let us illustrate this distinction with the following story. Jack and Jill work as temporary tellers at a bank. The bank has only one permanent teller position open, and either Jack or Jill will be chosen for the job after a probationary period. As soon as he is on the job, Jack finds that he has strong temptations to embezzle funds from his new employers. He finds these temptations so troubling that he decides to take a solemn vow not to follow through with these intentions. The vow works and Jack makes it through the probationary period without succumbing. Meanwhile, at the other station, Jill goes through her daily routine not once thinking of stealing funds.

Our story obviously makes Jack the *enkrates* and Jill the *sophron* (He would be an *akrates* without the vow). First, note how absurd it would be for anyone to suggest that Jill needs to take the vow that Jack has taken. Second, both Jack and Jill are deserving of praise, but note that while we would commend Jill for her virtue, we can praise Jack only for his will power to resist temptation. We may believe that Jack's action has moral content, and some may even propose that Jack deserves higher praise (In

fact, Immanuel Kant supports this view because we know for sure that Jack is being honest out of duty and not just mere inclination, while Jill's easy virtue obscures her commitment to duty). But I contend that more dramatic examples of duress virtue—the person who has strong urges to murder every person that she meets but always manages to restrain herself; or the man who wants to rape every woman he meets but desists demonstrates that there may be no moral value of Jack's heroic efforts. Third, let us say, just for the sake of forcing the argument, that the bank managers somehow learn of Jack's temptations (He frequently mutters to himself and pounds himself on the forehead like Gandhi used to do). It is clear that bank managers will obviously not be able to trust Jack and that they will offer the job to Jill without hesitation.

The point of the argument put forth thus far is to suggest that an ethics of virtues and a morality of vows are conceptually divergent and may also assume significantly different views of human nature and the nature of evil. It has been said that Aristotle did not fully appreciate the depth and extent of human evil. While he can envision a person with insufficient will to follow the mean, he cannot conceive of a person who deliberately wills evil and certainly not one who would actually take pleasure in it. It is significant that for Aristotle the only one "with will" (the literal meaning of *enkrates*) is the person who stays in the mean under duress, not the person with the will to deliberately do evil. Aristotle does admit that persistent misfortune (Oedipus is a good example) can destroy the conditions for personal happiness. The Stoics, however, read the external world as one of insurmountable misery and the Christian view of original sin further undermined the optimism and perfectionism of the classical Greeks.

The Stoics' contribution to virtue ethics is considerable, but ironically they were responsible for its eventual demise. As we have seen, the Stoics reaffirmed the concept of virtues as skills and the fact that they are whole the entire time they are expressed. However, their devaluation of the affective dimensions of the human soul led to a position where virtue was an internal process of conformation to cosmic reason and its laws. The Stoic withdrawal from the world and from the body led to a rejection of the empirical ego in favour of a universal self, one, as Epictetus said, who never sleeps, is never deceived, and always knows the good. The Stoics then set the stage for the full decline of virtue ethics in Christian philosophy. There is no good except obedience to law, whether it be given by reason or God, whether it be by divine command or out of the divine nature. Furthermore, the Stoic view that success is not necessary for virtue leads, ironically, from Augustine to Kant, to the view that the virtues are not necessary for morality at all. Only Thomas Aquinas, under Aristotle's profound influence, resisted this destruction of the classical virtue tradition.

Augustine's emphasis on original sin and the omnipotence of God led him to reject the Greek view that we can develop virtues on our own power. This dual emphasis on sin and omnipotence also results in a

paradoxical position on the resolution of evil. For the Greeks, those who experience great misfortune have no recourse except to endure it, and in *Oedipus at Colonus* the hero, comforted by his equally brave daughters, accepts his fate with grace and equanimity. For the Christian, however, the extent and depth of evil is much greater and punishment for sin is infinite torment. Some are surprised to learn that even Kant believed in radical evil, the original sin against the moral law that produces "infinite guilt." As Kant states: "It would seem to follow, then, that because of this infinite guilt all mankind must look forward to endless punishment and exclusion from the Kingdom of God."²⁶ On the bright side, the promise of God's grace offers final and complete relief from all misfortune and suffering. For the Greeks, the stakes are lower but complete reconciliation is impossible; for the Christians the stakes are much higher but for a sincere person a ready solution is right at hand. As Christine MacKinnon states: "The problem for the agent who disobeys God is that the stakes are so high: the fate of his soul must be the most important thing the agent is to consider when he contemplates his welfare."²⁷

Augustine's position also resulted in distinctively European focus on the will and its alleged freedom, a view of the will that one does not find in ancient philosophy, either Asian or European (I qualify this freedom because Augustine's God empowers those who turn away from him just as he empowers those to turn to him in grace). This focus on the will and sin has subtly transformed our intuitions about the *enkrates* and the *sophron*. It culminates in Kant's position that the *enkrates* is the only one that we know is conforming to moral law and the only one whose action has moral worth. The emphasis on sin has led us to suspect people like Jill; indeed, for people who love to speak of such things, it is the Devil who prefers to disguise himself as a person of easy virtue and elegant manners. For Christians committed to original sin the *sophron* must either be an illusion, or at least secretly bad; at worst Satan in disguise, or at best the incarnation of God himself. In such a view perfection of this sort is not of this world.

Returning now to Gandhi, it appears that the taking of vows is necessarily connected to rule ethics rather than to virtue ethics. A vow can be best seen as the self-enforcement of a rule. Gandhi is definitely more like Kant than Aristotle if the Rudolphs are correct in saying that he held that "only self-control in the midst of temptation was worthy."²⁸ Was Gandhi's view of human nature so negative that he concluded that vows rather than free development of virtues was the only option for humankind? This, I submit, is not Gandhi's view. His neo-Vedantist view of the self and his negative views of the body and the passions, align him very closely with the Stoics. As one of my bright ethics students once said, "duress virtue is the father of natural virtue," so we might think of Gandhi's vows as instruments to train Satyagrahis to develop the virtues necessary for world peace. One could envision, especially within the context of Hindu perfectionism, the Gandhian gradually moving from the *enkrates* state to

that of the *sophron*. Theoretically, however, the neo-Vedantist position requires that we view the *Atman* as already morally perfect, so this would be a "recovery" rather than a "developmental" view of the virtues. I personally support the latter and that is why I propose that Gandhi's ethics of nonviolence be reformulated along Pali Buddhist lines, for most Mahayana Buddhist schools have reinstated the Higher Self of Vedanta.

GANDHI'S VOWS

Returning to the proposal that Gandhi's vows could turn into virtues that people could enjoy, a critic might raise an obvious objection: Why did the Mahatma himself never make this transition and why did he have to struggle with temptation all his life, even to the point of frequently striking out against himself for his failings? His closest associates uniformly attest to frequent outbursts of anger. Here is one of Manu's observations: "While he was pouring out his soul like this [objecting to good wool used as garlands], he looked the very picture of a volcano in eruption."²⁹ This is not an image of Aristotle's *sophron*. Before 1906, when he took the first vow of *brahmacharya*, he admitted that he was an *akrates*, one who not only lacked the will to deny himself the pleasures of sexual intercourse but also one who had insufficient faith in the grace of God.³⁰ In 1939 he spoke of evil as a real force in the world and admitted that he had much of it in him.³¹ Here is strong evidence that Gandhi cannot join Confucius, the Buddha, or Aristotle in a humanistic development virtue ethics. With their emphasis on evil and divine grace, the passages above provide strong support for a Christian rule and duty ethics.

Gandhi believes that vows "can be taken only on points of universally recognized principles,"³² and that they are taken with the higher self as witness and the lower self and its desires as the object of control. Typically, Gandhi moves from Vedantist monism to personal theism with no hesitation. God is the perfect model of inflexible resolve, because, as Gandhi explains, "God is the very image of the vow. God would cease to be God if He swerved from His own laws even by a hair's breadth."³³ Gandhi, according to Suman Khanna, believed a vow to be a "sacred commitment to God" and that "breaking a vow is tantamount to a breach of faith with God on the one hand, and being untruthful to oneself, on the other."³⁴ Taking a vow is a way of grabbing hold of the Good—God—and not letting it go.

The Sanskrit word for vow is *vrata* and its earliest use in the *Rigveda* is linked to divine will or command.³⁵ For Khanna a vow is an internal sanction: a "commitment to an injunction voluntarily imposed on oneself."³⁶ For Gandhi a vow means having "unflinching determination [that] helps us against temptation,"³⁷ so vow taking for him appears to be a form of duress virtue. It is a way of storming the fortress of virtue and overcoming all odds and scoring success. Presumably it is the only possible way to coerce yourself along the way of moral perfection. *Brahmacharya* does not

become the effortless disposition required by the *sophron*; rather, "it is like walking on the sword's edge, and I see every moment the necessity for eternal vigilance."³⁸ Here again, it is the Hindu dramatic vision of extremes rather than calm Buddhist Middle Way. While in South Africa he convinced himself that he could maintain his vows with "no effort" by simply holding to his diet of fruit and nuts, although he did find that adding milk to his diet made the vow difficult again. But these suggestions that humans on their own power can consummate their vow are undermined by the strong assertion that *brahmacharya* is "impossible to attain by mere human effort."³⁹

Gandhi's language is ambiguous and not always consistent; so it is always difficult to determine whether this is a Stoic-Kantian model or a traditional Christian one, in which a transcendent God is directing the moral life. The Christian view is seen in Gandhi's strong hints that divine grace is necessary: "Win divine grace for us in good time, and all artificial tastes will then disappear with the realization of the Highest."⁴⁰ The Vedantist Gandhi would of course follow the Stoics and Kant, with *Atman*, as the immanent divinity giving itself (gracing itself) the same cosmic laws that others in tune with their higher selves would do. When we read that "the straight way to cultivate *brahmacharya* is the Ramanama [repeating the name of the god Rama];" or that the initial vow of 1906 was successful only "with faith in the sustaining power of God,"⁴¹ then the theistic perspective appears to dominate.

Before we analyze Gandhi's principal vows, we should discuss the additional vows that Gandhi added, consistent with his contextual pragmatism, for twentieth-century India. The addition of these vows can be seen as the direct result of Gandhi's experiments in truth: they are, as he says, "directly deducible from Truth."⁴² Furthermore, each one of them stands in considerable conflict with traditional Hindu *dharma*. The phrase "deducible from Truth" implies logical deduction and a necessary relation between premises and conclusions. We have seen, however, that Gandhi's experiments in truth are thoroughly empirical and, in addition, as "they are enjoined by the present age," it is clear that they are fully contingent. Indeed, if the socio-economic conditions that caused the need for these addition vows change, then the vows would no longer be necessary. Therefore we can establish a distinction between basic and necessary vows, such as *brahmacharya*, based as they are on certain facts of human nature that will not change, and contingent vows determined of the conditions of the "present age."

First and foremost among the contingent vows is Gandhi's demand that all Indians commit themselves to the elimination of untouchability. Although many contemporary Indians still have great difficulty with this imperative, the central government has implemented, not of course without protest and controversy, a quota system for the Scheduled Castes, more generally known today as the Dalits. The second vow of bread labour also

conflicts with traditional *dharma*, in that it requires all people regardless of caste/class to involve themselves in the dignity-producing activity of physical labour. Indeed, Gandhi recommends that every person commits herself/himself regularly to the lowest menial labour as a gesture to those who have done these jobs for centuries (Gandhi himself went one step further and prayed that he be reborn an untouchable). The third vow of *sarvadharmā samabhāva* extends the elimination of caste distinction to the tolerance of all religious faiths. The conceptual similarity is deeper at the practical level. Gandhi proposed that we not merely tolerate other religions but actually attempt to step into their precepts and their forms of life.

The fourth and final vow for the present age is the *vrata* of *swadeshi*, which is best translated as "self-realization" and is expressed personally and socially in a life of communal self-sufficiency. In the context of Vedantist philosophy, self-realization is the discovery of the *Atman* common to all people, so that the traditional concept of autonomy is eliminated in the vow "of selfless service . . . and the purest *ahimsa*, that is, love."⁴³ Gandhi appears to equivocate on the contingent nature of *swadeshi* when he states that it "stands for the final emancipation of the soul from her earthly bondage."⁴⁴ This not only implies a necessary connection to human nature (thus making it a basic vow), but the Vedantist overtones make this move highly problematic for the social dimensions of *swadeshi* and the fully embodied self that this vow requires.

These fundamental problems create an occasion to reaffirm a basic element of my thesis: a Buddhist relational self is much better suited to *swadeshi*, in that it prevents the loss of personal identity that all forms of Vedānta imply (and that Advaita Vedānta asserts) and fully situates the self in the body and society. For example, it is hard to understand how "cultivating self-confidence"⁴⁵ has any meaning if the individual self is ultimately unreal. This self-confidence, Gandhi claims, is necessary for courage, a virtue that is intelligible only on the basis of personal integrity and agency. To say that *Atman* is fearless, when this entity has, strictly speaking, no qualities, is to say nothing at all. Furthermore, a Buddhist interpretation would bring Gandhi's ethics back from the extremes that his vows tend to take him and encourages the contemporary Gandhians to follow the Middle Way.

Returning to the basic vows, *brahmacharya* is the supreme *vrata* that essentially includes all others. It literally means "dwelling in Truth-God [*brahma*]" and Nirmal Kumar Bose explains that it is "conduct that puts one in touch with God."⁴⁶ Generally taken to be a vow of chastity, Gandhi insists that it is much broader than that:

[chastity] is impossible without proper control over all the senses. They are all interdependent. Mind on the lower plane is included in the senses. Without control over the mind, mere physical control, even if it can be attained for a time, is of little or no use.⁴⁷

Control of the mind is obtained by taking the vow and initiating willful power over the senses. The goal of *brahmacharya* is nothing less than complete control of "thought, word, and deed."⁴⁸ In his *Autobiography* Gandhi claims that *Satyagraha* would not have been possible without first succeeding in this supreme vow.

Gandhi offers a provocative connection between *brahmacharya* and nonviolence when he proposes that "lying naked with a naked member of the opposite sex is the ultimate test for not doing violence to another."⁴⁹ The axiom appears to be that if you can overcome the temptations of sex, then you will also overcome the temptation to do violence and to retaliate. It is also an expression of great courage, sufficient to withstand the criticism of those who objected to such a risky experiment. When it comes to sexual temptations, the isolated ascetic, according to Gandhi, does not fully trust himself. He is actually a coward if he does put his self-control to the ultimate test.

Interestingly enough, Gandhi adds control of the palate (*astvada*) to the traditional list of Hindu vows. Its literal meaning is not to eat merely for the taste of food. Gandhi firmly believes that food should sustain the body, not please the palate. It is clear that this amounts to more than Aristotle's mean between gluttony and fasting. It also raises the issue about Gandhi's own fasting and perhaps yet another difference between vows and virtues. Vows, at least in Gandhian practice, tend to the extreme whereas classical virtue theory sought the mean in all actions. Aristotle, Confucius, and the Buddha would all agree that Gandhi's fasts unto death would constitute a vice and not a virtue (it is significant that Aquinas also argued that fasting was a vice).⁵⁰ One could contend that such fasts do in fact violate *astvada*, in so far as their positive implication is that food is required for human nourishment. Gandhi actually sounds very Aristotelian, even Buddhist, when he proposes that we must always be mindful and adjust our food intake according to our own bodily needs⁵¹ (in terms of our discussion of experiments in truth, we could say that to eat more than we need is to be untruthful—in the strict factual sense that our bodies do not need the extra calories). The body must therefore be kept fit for spiritual service. This positive imperative of *astvada* is therefore at odds with a political fast unto death in which the constant worry of course was Gandhi's health.

With regard to the vows of *asteya* (non-stealing) and non-possession (*aparigraha*) Gandhi proposed an experiment in truth that tested the full implications of these vows. The meaning of truth most appropriate for these two vows is the Greek sense of non-concealment (*aletheia*). Gandhi's special way to test his own and any possible thief's commitment to *asteya* was to leave all possessions in the full light of day. In his controversial tests of *brahmacharya* he also insisted on open sleeping arrangements to demonstrate that his bed partners were not his sexual possessions. This seems to imply that the veiling of women is a major violation of *asteya*. Not concealing your possessions means that you confuse potential thieves in a

way that can best help them overcome their temptations. They would also be morally disarmed by your lack of concern for your possessions and could very well serve as a way of shaming them to realize their own extreme possessiveness. In fact, it seems to be a rule that the more people possess, the more they are forced to conceal and to secure sometimes at a great cost and inconvenience to themselves. Gandhi believes that to look with envy at the possessions of others is to violate *asteya*, and even the one who fasts sins if he casts a desirous eye at any food.⁵² Gandhi makes the vow of non-possession so comprehensive that he concludes that "everyone of us is consciously or unconsciously more or less guilty of theft."⁵³ Again, Gandhi's ethics of vows tends to the extreme rather than the mean. Even the most accomplished (spiritual) fasters hallucinate about food, so Gandhi appears to be in strict agreement with the *Yogasutras* which require that one should not only control all conscious desires but also unconscious ones.

The fifth and final vow is fearlessness (*abhaya*) and the fact that this *vrata* is related to the virtue of courage allows us to make a transition from vows to virtues; or to anticipate our goal more precisely—to reinterpret the vows as enabling virtues later in this chapter. Except for *brahmacharya*, each of the vows is expressed with the Indo-European privative: no stealing, no possession, and no fear. This form of expression intensifies the notion of extremes in Gandhi's ethics of vows. For Aristotle, having no fear could be foolhardy and dangerous and would not always be what right reason (*phronesis*) requires. Suman Khanna, however, argues that Gandhi believes that the virtue (not vow) of humility is a precondition for all the vows. Proper humility prevents foolhardiness because the humble person does not overestimate "one's resources of courage."⁵⁴ We shall follow Khanna's constructive proposal in the next section where we discuss Gandhi's virtues. Before we do so, there is one issue that requires attention. Gandhi claims that *abhaya* "connotes freedom from all external fear"⁵⁵ and the key to this freedom is to distinguish between our true spiritual natures and our bodies. The reader should not be surprised that I encourage contemporary Gandhians to reject this advice and embrace a fully embodied self that an ethics of nonviolence and political engagement requires.

GANDHI'S VIRTUES

The evidence for a Gandhian virtue ethics is considerable. Central passages are the following:

Education, character, and religion should be regarded as convertible terms. There is no true education which does not tend to produce character, and there is no true religion which does not determine character. Education should contemplate the whole life. . . . I have no faith in the so-called system of education which produces men of learning without the backbone of character.



I have felt during the whole of my public life that what we need, what any nation needs, but we perhaps of all the nations of the world need just now, is nothing else and nothing less than character building.

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First of all, we shall have to consider how we can realise the self and how serve our country. . . . For realising the self, the first essential thing is to cultivate a strong moral sense. Morality means acquisition of virtues such as fearlessness, truth, chastity, etc. Service is automatically rendered to the country in this process of cultivating morality.⁵⁶

Refusing to separate the private from the public, Gandhi insisted that spiritual, moral, and civic virtues are all united.

A Buddhist Gandhi would follow the developmental model of virtue formation found in Aristotle and Confucius. The recovery model—found in Plato, the Stoics, a few neo-Confucians, some Mahayana schools, and Vedanta—holds that moral education involves coming in touch with a higher self that is already perfect. In terms of a Hindu ethics of nonviolence, this would mean that one acts out the *Atman* of perfect virtue rather than a self-centered *jiva*. In this model a vow is a life-long requirement to keep the violent ego in control. Only in the perfected yogi would the vows fall away as unnecessary. Suman Khanna suggests the developmental model for Gandhi when she states that the commitment of a vow “becomes effortless, just as the forming of good habits first needs continual effort of the will but later grows into character, from which good choices issue forth with ease.”⁵⁷

If we analyze the list of Gandhi’s vows and virtues, we notice at least two interesting points. First, Gandhi considers chastity both a vow and a virtue, and in his detailed comments on *Hind Swaraj* Anthony Parel calls the vow of non-possession a virtue.⁵⁸ If these are virtues in the traditional sense of a disposition that becomes habitual rather than constantly self-imposed, then the developmental thesis is supported. Second, humility is a virtue, not a vow; and Gandhi is very careful to distinguish between the two categories with regard to humility. Gandhi maintains that one cannot take a vow to become humble. Humility does not involve a specific decision or course of action. As he states: “Humility . . . does not lend itself to being deliberately practised.”⁵⁹ Objections immediately arise. Is not reducing ourselves to zero a specific decision and action? Doesn’t Gandhi contradict himself when he states that “true humility means most strenuous and constant endeavour entirely directed towards the service of humanity?”⁶⁰ We will return to the virtue of humility at the end of this section.

Gandhi joins the ancient virtue traditions by strongly supporting the unity of the virtues. To interpret this doctrine as the claim that the virtues have no differences whatsoever is of course absurd. For the Greeks, the virtues were one in the sense that virtue is knowledge. Each of them is formed according to right reason. For Aristotle, the moral virtues are the

same because they are products of *phronesis*, and they are different because of the many different spheres of action in which *phronesis* works. *Phronesis* operating in the sphere of self-worth becomes pride, just as temperance is the result in the area of controlling the appetites. I propose that Gandhi follows Aristotle by having truth unify the virtues. Following Jean Porter's analysis of Aquinas, I also concur with her emphasis on the dialectical relation between *phronesis* and the virtues: the former not only finds the mean for the latter but the development of the moral virtues aids practical reason in clarifying and fine tuning the goals of the good life.⁶¹ The moral virtues embody truths just as much as practical reason itself does.

Alan Donagans maintains that unifying the virtues in *phronesis* produces only a trivial truth: "Certainly Thomas' doctrine of the unity of the virtues follows if every virtue is defined as a disposition that accords with right reason. But why so define them—except to secure the result?"⁶² It seems to me, however, that as right reason is always relative to individuals and their circumstances, then their moral truths are synthetic rather than analytic. These propositions would obviously have specific empirical content as well as formal truth (This makes "never eat too much" a synthetic *a priori* proposition, because the formal truth is necessarily joined with unique and distinctive empirical content in every single eater). If the mean between the extremes were arithmetic and the same for all persons, a view that Aristotle explicitly rejects,⁶³ only then would the results of practical reason be trivially true.

We have argued, elsewhere, that Gandhi's experiments in truth are a contextual and pragmatic search for particular moral truths for particular situations. This means that the traditional truths about *brahmacharya* are deconstructed and then reapplied in a constructive post-modern sense. Writing from the Yeravda prison in 1932, he stated that "truth is the end, love is the means thereto."⁶⁴ For Gandhi, true love is the "active state of ahimsa,"⁶⁵ and courage is following one's own truth even to the point of ridicule and rejection. The virtues of integrity and sincerity, being true to oneself, are also necessary virtues in the search for truth. We have already proposed a parallel between the relationship of truth to God in Gandhi to the Confucian idea of Heaven's sincerity. The sage or saint are sincere in the same way that Heaven is: they are both constant and totally predictable; they are both true themselves and true to the present age.

It is significant that Gandhi speaks much more of self-control than temperance; in fact, the latter is seldom found in his writings. In talk about the virtues the two are often conflated, when in fact they are distinct in a very important sense. The very construction of the phrase "self-control" implies that one is engaging the will to restrain the appetites. This describes the *enkrateis* rather than *sophron*, who is essentially the embodiment of temperance (*sophrosyne*), the one who does not have to exert his will to stay in the mean. Gandhi thought that one greatest Indian vice was the lack of self-control. The Rudolphs diagnose the origins of this problem thus: "The

severe emphasis on self-restraint [in the Indian tradition], on formality and harmlessness, may well be allied to the omnipresent fear of loss of self-control."⁶⁶ This emphasis on self-control rather than on temperance indicates an ethics of vows and duties rather than of virtues.

Raghavan Iyer offers an alternative framework for the Gandhian virtues in his observation that "Gandhi tended to assimilate all the virtues to that of moral courage."⁶⁷ Even in his time Aristotle had realized that courage was more than just the physical bravery of his Greek forefathers, who "strutted their stuff" with drawn swords. Susanne and Lloyd Rudolph distinguish between physical bravery—not being afraid to use violence to defend one's home and principles—and Gandhi's nonviolent moral courage as the will not to retaliate in the face of violence.⁶⁸ Recall that Confucius warned his disciples that many people could be brave without being *ren*, the obvious implication being that truly courageous people know and trust themselves so well that the force of their virtue (the Chinese *de* expresses this idea perfectly) tends to pacify any dangerous situation. We have seen that Gandhi was able to convince the physically brave Pathan warriors to change their ways by his moral courage. In terms of the aesthetics of virtue and the power of *de* it is significant that Confucius and his disciples were able to fend off an attack simply by singing.

Gandhi speaks of active nonviolence as both love and truth, so yet another profitable way to see Gandhian virtues is through the virtue of love. Here is a crucial passage:

In its positive form, ahimsa means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of ahimsa, I must love my enemy. I must apply the same rule of the wrong-doer who is my enemy or a stranger to me, as I would to my wrong-doing father or son. This active ahimsa necessarily includes truth and fearlessness.⁶⁹

Here we see the frequent trinity of truth, courage, and ahimsa as cardinal Gandhian virtues.

Instructive comparisons suggest themselves from both Confucius and Aquinas. For the former *ren* as filial love is the comprehensive virtue that authenticates all the other virtues. Ideally the *ren* person would not and could not dissemble in any of the virtues; it would be impossible for the *ren* person not to be loyal or courageous or not to be true to herself. A principal difference between Gandhi and Confucius would be the unconditional love for the stranger, a view that obviously makes him closer to the Buddhist or Christian tradition. For Aquinas *caritas* is the ultimate form of all the virtues, including prudence; it, like *ren*, is the comprehensive virtue in which all the others are perfected. Thomist Josef Pieper distinguishes between "natural" and "Christian" prudence such that the latter is a keener insight into "new and invisible realities."⁷⁰ Both Aristotle and Confucius would balk at this supernatural extension of practical reason, but Gandhi would most likely embrace the idea. Even the Buddha would

say that ESP was crucial in proving the truth of "those who know causality know the Dharma." Gandhi would have been particularly sympathetic to Pieper's view that Christian love may very well lead one to hold "as nought all the things of this world."⁷¹

Gandhi says that people can cultivate truth and love, but they try to make themselves humble only at the risk of hypocrisy and pride. The reason for this odd stance might be the Vedantist assumptions implied in this passage: "In one who has ahimsa in him [humility] becomes part of his very nature."⁷² In several passages Gandhi insists that the true self is nonviolent, so this means that the true self is also humble. The concept of the self being nonviolent by nature will be critiqued in the next section. This is not quite correct because true humility "should make its possessor realize that he is nothing."⁷³ But *Atman* is not nothing; it is of course everything. It can only be the *jiva* self that is reduced to nothing. Coherence is finally obtained when Gandhi describes the humble self as analogous to a drop in the ocean as *jiva* is to *Atman-Brahman*. On the virtue of humility it is obvious that Gandhi again joins the Christian tradition and rejects Aristotle's view that humility is a vice. For the Greeks "reducing oneself to zero" could never be the correct view of one's self-worth.

NONVIOLENCE AS AN ENABLING VIRTUE

Virtue theorists have generally distinguished between two types of virtues: "enabling" virtues and "substantive" virtues. The enabling virtues include optimism, rationality, self-control, patience, sympathy, foresight, resoluteness, endurance, fortitude, and industry. The substantive virtues are wisdom, courage, justice, truthfulness, temperance, benevolence, and compassion. The substantive virtues have moral content or "substance," that is, the right desire to tell the truth or help the needy, whereas the enabling virtues simply require an effort to resist one temptation or another. The substantive virtues require proper motivation towards the good, while the enabling virtues require sufficient will power to counter evil. Of the four cardinal virtues, only prudence and justice "do the good," as Josef Pieper says, while courage and temperance "create the basis this realization of the good."⁷⁴

This distinction tests true when we think of a thief who is persistent, resolute, patient, and has fantastic self-control. Thieves without these virtues are usually the ones that get caught! The fact that we can think of a loyal and courageous villain had led some to argue convincingly that these two virtues really ought to be moved to the enabling category. Another psychological test by which one can distinguish the two is to use Aristotle's requirement that one must take pleasure in the virtues. This criterion must apply only to the substantive virtues, because it is clear that one is not required to enjoy a courageous act of persevering torture. As Robert C. Roberts quips: "A person who enjoys enduring dangers is better called

daredevilish than brave."⁷⁵ On the other hand, it makes no sense that a person must dislike being truthful or compassionate. This means that a person could have all the enabling virtues without having a single substantive virtue.

Let us now itemize the criteria for identifying an enabling virtue: (i) it does not have moral content nor does it appeal to a norm; (ii) it is not done for its own sake, but for the sake of a substantive virtue; and (iii) one does not take pleasure in it as with the substantive virtues. Conceived as a virtue, nonviolence fulfils these criteria nicely. We all need a nonviolent disposition if we are to overcome desires to injure, retaliate, and to verbally abuse. We also need good self-control and patience. In fact, Gandhi equates impatience with injury (*himsa*), provocatively implying that impatience is at the root of all violence.⁷⁶ One could object that much violence in the world is done with deliberate, albeit malicious, patience. Self-control, patience, and non-injury are obviously connected to the will to resist rather than the will to motivate. Recall Rudolph's definition of Gandhi's nonviolent moral courage as the will not to retaliate in the face of violence. That means that a nonviolent thief is not only possible but also probably the most successful. It is also clear that one does not control oneself for the sake of self-control, nor is one nonviolent simply for the sake of non-injury. Furthermore, resisting the temptation of retaliation while enduring the attacks of an aggressor would obviously not be a pleasant activity. Finally, it appears reasonable to reinterpret Gandhi's basic vows as enabling virtues with *brahmacharya* embracing them all as ultimate self-control.

Our discovery that *ahimsa* is an enabling virtue explains why it is not listed among the major Buddhist virtues. *Ahimsa*, therefore, joins patience, sympathy, and self-control, the three other enabling virtues in Buddhist ethics. The Dalai Lama's analysis of the virtues parallels the current discussion in a way that allows a conceptual transition to the final section of this paper. When he reaffirms that the cessation of suffering is the ultimate goal of the good life, he is simply giving the negative formulation of the Buddhist eudaimonism. When he states that faith and compassion are "virtues by way of their own nature," he is essentially identifying them as substantives virtues. And when he says that mindfulness is a virtue "by way of association," I interpret this to mean that it is an enabling virtue.⁷⁷ One is not mindful for mindfulness sake but for the sake of love and compassion.

Let us return to Jainism for an instructive contrast. The Jains believe that *ahimsa* belongs to "the intrinsic nature of man,"⁷⁸ and they hold that it has absolute value. The implication is that nonviolence is a "substantive" virtue in a stronger, metaphysical sense than we have defined it above. Jain nonviolence is not anything motivated or developed, it is simply the natural state of the sinless soul. This means that the Jains have a "recovery" rather than a "discovery" model for the virtues. In several passages Gandhi appears to agree with Jains on this point, particularly when he states that

Atman is nonviolent. More frequently, however, he says that *ahimsa* is a virtue that must be attained, and he claims that it is a means to a higher end, usually Truth or God.⁸⁶ Resisting the natural temptation to absolutize it, Gandhi has ascertained the proper place of *ahimsa* among the virtues. *Ahimsa* begins in self-restraint, self-purification, and selflessness and ends in love and compassion. Like the Buddhists, Gandhi believed that *ahimsa* without compassion is nothing, just as gold is an amorphous material without goldsmith's artistic shape or the root is nothing without the magnificent tree.⁷⁹ The enabling virtues are the roots, but the flowering tree of the substantive virtues is the true goal of the good life.

Making *ahimsa* a disposition rather than the essence of the soul preserves the essential element of freedom. Gandhi frequently spoke of the animal side of human nature, and how one must struggle to choose violence over nonviolence. As in all enabling virtues, it involves the will to resist more than the will to motivate. If we are nonviolent by nature, then we cannot be praised for choosing peaceful actions. On the other hand, we cannot be completely devoid of a disposition for non-injury, for, as Gandhi says, "means to be means must always be within our reach."⁸⁰ One is reminded of the Mencian view that the virtues exist as potentials within the soul; and, like spouts, they must be nurtured for the good life to flower. The language of "means within our reach" is support for the developmental view of the virtues that we should impute to Gandhi. Furthermore, Gandhi frequently reminds us that true *ahimsa* towards an attacker must combine physical non-retaliation with love and compassion. In other words, mere passivity without the proper disposition and accompanying virtues is not necessarily *ahimsa*. Therefore *ahimsa* must be a means to the end of the spiritual life, not an end in itself. The true proponent of nonviolence would hold that only life (Gandhi prefers Truth or God) has intrinsic value, and *ahimsa* obviously is the ultimate means of preserving life.

A critic might respond that *ahimsa* must be a substantive virtue because the precept "do not injure" always guides its implementation. But one can formulate a norm for several other enabling virtues. For example, the rule for patience would be "always control your temptation to act hastily;" and the norm for fortitude would be "never give up on a task worth pursuing." Interestingly, the only way to formulate the implied rule in the enabling virtue of rationality is the tautology "always be rational." Furthermore, the virtue of courage (and most likely others) does not lend itself to any easy formulation along these lines. True to the concrete particularity of the moral virtues, the description would require endless qualification. Even the specifications of patience and fortitude above are rather wordy and open to limiting conditions. I obviously cannot answer the objection in this one paragraph, but I am confident that application of the other criteria (especially done for its own sake) would secure these virtues as enabling rather than substantive. Finally, with regard to Gandhi, it is clear that he meant *ahimsa* to be a means to higher ends of love and compassion.

Notes and References

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3. See Ian Tattersall, *The Last Neanderthal* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, revised ed., 1999), p. 169-70.
4. Michael L. Spangle and Kent E. Menzel, "Symbol, Metaphor, and Myth: The Origin and Impact of Spoken Language," paper presented at the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Language Origins in DeKalb, Illinois, 1991; for example, that deaf school children who read without speaking a language have difficulty in understanding abstractions (see Helmer R. Mykelbust, *The Psychology of Deafness* [New York: Northwestern University Press, 1966]). I am indebted to Shane Sheffner, student in my seminar on virtue ethics, for these references.
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8. Martha Nussbaum, "Non-Relative Virtues," p. 44.
9. Bernard Mayo, *Ethics and the Moral Life*, excerpted in Christina and Fred Sommers, eds, *Vice and Virtue in Everyday Life* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1989), p. 199.
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12. See Stephen D. Moore and Janice Capel Anderson, "Taking it Like a Man: Masculinity in 4 Maccabees," *Journal of Biblical Literature*, Vol. 117, No. 2 (1998), pp. 249-73.
13. *The Lass of Manu*, trans. Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty and Brian K. Smith (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1991), 3.93; 7.5. Most of this paragraph is taken from my *Spiritual Titanism: Indian, Chinese, and Western Perspectives* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2000), p. 122.
14. *Ibid.*, 4:41, 44.
15. John Strachey, *India: Its Administration and Progress* (London: Macmillan, 1888), p. 412; cited in Susanne H. and Lloyd I. Rudolph, *The Modernity of Tradition: Political Development in India* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 165.
16. CWMG, Vol. 19, p. 12.

17. *Harijan*, 23 July 1938, p. 192.
18. M.K. Gandhi, *Women's Role in Society*, cited in Raghavan Iyer, *Moral and Political Thought of Mahatma Gandhi*, p. 37.
19. *Harijan*, 14 November 1936, p. 316. "Woman is the incarnation of *ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering" (*Harijan*, 14 February 194). "If only the women of the world would come together they could display such heroic nonviolence as to kick away the atom bomb like a mere ball. . . . If the women of Asia wake up, they will dazzle the world. My experiment in nonviolence would be instantly successful if I could secure women's help" (Message to Chinese Women, New Delhi, 18 July 1947, excerpted in Raghavan Iyer, ed., *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991), p. 387).
20. Pyarelal, *The Last Phase*, Vol. 1, p. 595. Pyarelal states that Gandhi once described himself as a "half a woman," and Mrs Polak noted a "trait of sexlessness" even in his South Africa days (Chandrashekhar Shukla, ed., *Gandhiji as We Know Him*, 1945, p. 47). A Mrs Shukla said that "there are some things relating to our lives that we women can speak of . . . with no man. But while speaking to Gandhi we somehow forgot the fact that he was a man" (Chandrashekhar Shukla, *Gandhiji's View of Life* [Bombay, 1951], p. 199).
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30. M.K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, p. 7.
31. *Harijan*, 10 June 1939.
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36. Suman Khanna, *Gandhi and the Good Life*, p. 59.
37. SWMG, Vol. 4, p. 248.
38. M.K. Gandhi, *Autobiography*, p. 8.
39. SWMG, Vol. 4, p. 248.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 226.
41. *Harijan*, 22 and 29 June 1947, pp. 200, 212.
42. Quoted without reference in Suman Khanna, *Gandhi and the Good Life*, p. 75.
43. SWMG, Vol. 4, p. 256.
44. *Ibid.*
45. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
46. Nirmal Kumar Bose, ed., *Selections from Gandhi* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1957), p. 248.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 249.
48. *Ibid.*
49. Pyarelal, *The Last Phase*, Vol. 1, p. 591; Letter to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, 18 March 1947.
50. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, II-II, 147, 1 and 2.
51. SWMG, Vol. 4, p. 226.
52. "One who takes no food, physically speaking, is generally said to be fasting, but he is guilty of theft as well as a breach of his fast, if he gives himself up to a mental contemplation of pleasure, when he sees others taking their meals" (*ibid.*, p. 228). It is a widely known fact that even the spiritual masters have vivid hallucinations about devouring great amounts of food, a reaction that appears to be completely involuntary.
53. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
54. Suman Khanna, *Gandhi and the Good Life*, p. 71.
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56. CWMG, Vol. 37, p. 362; Vol. 13, p. 225; Vol. 10, p. 70. See also Vol. 10, pp. 206-07.
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68. The Rudolphs, op. cit., pp. 187ff.
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Nationalism as a Spiritual Sensibility: Martin Buber and Gandhi

Sarojini Henry

IN HIS REPLY to Gandhi's article, "The Jews," published in his prestigious weekly *Harijan* dated 26 November 1938, Martin Buber wrote back from Jerusalem, to Gandhi's ashram at Seagon. Gandhi's article¹ openly stated: "The cry for a national home for the Jews does not make much appeal to me." Further: "The Palestine of the Biblical conception is not a geographical tract. It is in their hearts. But if they must look to the Palestine of geography as the National home, it is wrong to enter it under the shadow of the British gun." Gandhi had even proposed that the fulfilment of the Zionist goals be wholly dependent on the goodwill of the Arabs. A second point that Gandhi touched upon in this article, was about the Nazi persecution of the Jews in Germany. While admitting that the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime had no parallel in history, Gandhi nevertheless suggested that the Jews in Germany should use Satyagraha as the most effective weapon against Nazi violence, following the example of the Indian minority who offered soul force to the unjust regime in South Africa. The Jews, contended Gandhi, should refuse to be expelled from Germany and, if necessary, accept death voluntarily. "If the Jewish mind," he wrote, "could be prepared for voluntary suffering, even the massacre . . . could be turned into a day of thanksgiving and joy . . . For the God-fearing death has no terror."

Martin Buber, a German Jew, who had migrated to Israel in 1938, had all along advocated a renewal of Jewish spiritual nationalism. Now he was far from being convinced of the strength of Gandhi's argument, which, in his view, did not take full account of the factors involved. From his student days, Buber was involved in Zionist activities and he firmly believed that the Jews had to have a homeland of their own. Yet, following Zionists such as David Ben Gurion (1886-1973), Buber believed that the Zionist priorities

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should take into consideration the Arab national aspirations and advocated moral sensitivity to the Arab question. While in Germany, Buber belonged to a small group of Jews who wanted to offer peaceful resistance to the Nazi persecution. In this mood, Buber even delayed leaving Germany before settling in Palestine. Therefore it is not surprising that he was much disturbed by Gandhi's statement and wanted to convey his sentiments to the Indian exponent of soul force that Gandhi was.

Buber seems to have composed his reply² over several weeks, deliberating deeply before penning his arguments. "Day and night," he wrote, "I took myself to the task of searching . . . whether I had not fallen into the grievous error of collective egoism." Buber tried to explain the main motifs of Zionism. "Zion," he wrote, "is in men's hearts because it is in the world." Zion is a symbol and a prophetic image only because Zion actually exists. "Three thousand year ago," Buber wrote, "our entry into this land was in the consciousness of a mission from above to set up a just way of life through the generations of our people," a way of life that can only be realized in the establishment of a Jewish society observing a common Sabbath, a sabbatical year and community ownership of the land. He continued: "We went into exile with our task unperformed, but the command remained with us. . . . We need our own soil to fulfil it." What was decisive for Buber was the command from above, the "fulfilment of which is bound up with the land." Buber reminded Gandhi that centuries back the Arabs too had come to settle in the land and therefore Buber hoped that both Jews and Arabs would "together develop the land without one imposing on the other." Buber reiterated: "We cannot renounce the Jewish claim" but then he continued, "we consider it our duty to understand and to honour the claim which is opposed to ours and to endeavour to reconcile both claims." Further: "We love this land and we believe in its future and given that such love and such faith are surely present also on the other side, a union in the common service of the land must be within the range of the possible. Where there is faith and love, a solution may be found even to what appears to be a tragic contradiction."

With reference to Gandhi's counsel that the Jews should offer Satyagraha, Buber was deeply distressed by Gandhi's attitude which, in his opinion, showed little understanding of the issues at stake. Centuries of Jewish history in Germany and in other countries of Europe revealed the price that the Jews had to pay for passively accepting their fate at the hands of their oppressors. In fact, the Jews were the earliest practitioners of nonviolence. That any sacrifice on the part of German Jewry would stir the conscience of Nazi Germany is beyond any one's imagination, considering the atrocities meted out to the Jews. Buber pointed out that the Jews were being "persecuted, robbed, maltreated, tortured, murdered." There can be no comparison between the barbarity of the Nazis and the injustice rendered to the Indians in South Africa. Perhaps Gandhi was ignorant of what was going on in Germany. Buber could not help putting a question to Gandhi,

"do you know or do you not know, Mahatma, what a concentration camp is like and what goes on there? . . . Are you not aware of the burning of synagogues and scrolls of the Torah?"

Gandhi evidently had his own reasons for writing the controversial article in *Harijan*. His Jewish friends had requested him to declare publicly his views on their efforts to find a National Home in Palestine. While in South Africa, Gandhi acquired some close Jewish friends. Hermann Kallenbach, a German Jew, played a leading role in Gandhi's Satyagraha since its inception. Henry Polak, another Jew edited *Indian Opinion* for Gandhi. Through Kallenbach, Gandhi hired a Jewish secretary, Sonja Schlesin, a woman of strong opinions and high ideals. Besides these close friends, there were Morris Philipson, a Jewish member of the South African Parliament; Garbriel Isaacs, who lived with Gandhi at his Phoenix settlement; and Louis Ritch, who did much legal work for the Indian cause. Gandhi's Jewish friends in India include Dr Joseph Benjamine who was very active in the Indian National Congress and Dr Abraham Erulkar, Gandhi's physician during his fasts. Therefore Gandhi's sympathy for the Jews expressed in his article can be taken to be genuine. He was also probably sincere in his belief that, because of the homogeneity of the Jewish people and their giftedness, there was more hope of a greater success than that achieved by the Indian Satyagraha in multi-tribal South Africa.

By the year 1939, Gandhi was perhaps the world's foremost advocate and exemplar of nonviolent methods of political action. His political principle of Satyagraha and nonviolence came to be widely recognized in the West. It is not impossible that some of the Jewish advocates of Arab-Jewish reconciliation viewed Gandhi's peaceful spiritual mode of political action as a model for achieving Arab-Jewish amity. Buber himself seems to have followed Gandhi's political actions closely. In his article, "Gandhi, Politics, and Us," published in 1930, he describes Gandhi's heroic attempts to introduce the religious spirit into politics. Gandhi, according to Buber, brought religion and ethics into politics in a way that was both impressive and problematic.

The beginning of the twentieth century saw the reformation of nationalism almost everywhere; with this spirit of nationalism came the attachment of people to the land they owned and possessed. It looked as though the age of empires was coming to an end. Of the many empires that the world has seen the British Empire was the most memorable, and perhaps the most majestic, and India was, for a period of two centuries, part of the Crown—indeed its jewel. Although the struggle for independence was to be long and hazardous, India eventually attained independence in 1947. The Indian national struggle for independence was a phenomenon unprecedented in history. No less unprecedented was Gandhi's application of his principle of Satyagraha in politics. Starting alone and helped by

many Indian Congress members along the way, Gandhi faced the fight of the British Raj and made it retreat, and that too in his own lifetime.

Buber always remained firm in his support of the Jewish settlement in Palestine. "We could not and cannot renounce the Jewish claim," he wrote to Gandhi. At the same time, Buber was sure that the Jewish claim did not negate the rights and privileges of the Arab people. Thus it was prophetic politics that Buber offered to his people—a politics that sought to provide a solution to the political and social problems based on dialogue and mutual accommodation. Concern for Palestine and the Jews was, however, never lacking in British imperial thinking. Although the Balfour Declaration may be construed as part of British strategic calculation for extended control over West Asia, it at least gave hopes of a secure home for Jews in Palestine. What had seemed an impossible dream of the nineteenth-century Zionists now became a reality. In 1948 a year after India's independence, Israel became a nation.

It is in these historical circumstances that we have to appreciate the lives of Gandhi and Buber. They were both deeply influenced by the events in their respective countries. They were also convinced that it is the spiritual and cultural forms that shape a people's history. It was with this belief that Buber worked unceasingly for a rapprochement between the Arabs and the Jews, while Gandhi laboured for the Hindu-Muslim unity in India. In their view, the inner life of a people was ultimately more significant for the destiny of a people than its political fortunes. For both Gandhi and Buber, the sacred cannot be separated from the secular and consequently they viewed their political work within the context of their spiritual quest.

MARTIN BUBER: THE THEOLOGIAN OF DIALOGUE

The Park Avenue Synagogue in New York was packed with people on 13 July 1965, one month after Martin Buber's death. The crowd from all walks of life had gathered to take part in a memorial service for the great scholar who during his long life of eighty-seven years, was able to delve deep into a galaxy of studies ranging from philosophy to education, to psychology, to politics, to biblical studies, to education, to Hasidism, and further, Buber was widely acclaimed in both Jewish and Christian circles for his philosophy of dialogue. As Secretary-General of the United Nations (1953-1961), Dag Hammarskjöld, was deeply influenced by Buber's philosophy and at the time of his death was in the process of translating Buber's writings into Swedish.

In spite of his worldwide fame, scholars have found it hard to pinpoint Buber's place in the academic field. Was Buber a philosopher, a theologian, a hasidic saint, an educator, or a biblical scholar? Buber himself denied that he was a philosopher, saying that he was not interested in ideas themselves. In a similar way he rejected the suggestion that he was a theologian. Buber insisted that he was not qualified to expound on God's essential nature and

he could only write about God's relation to human persons. Buber was also against separating the religious, as a sacred speciality, from the secular and called for the recognition of the divine presence in daily life. In a similar vein, he refused to accept the feasibility of union with God, the declared aim of the mystic.

Pamela Vermes affirms³ that the only thing that can be said with certainty about Buber was that he was a committed Zionist. Here again, Buber was unique, in that he belonged to a group of associates who were against the politics of power and favoured cultured Zionism. These people worked for a rapprochement with the Arabs and looked forward to a peaceful settlement. Advocating a binational state in which Jews and Arabs would live as two culturally autonomous people with absolute political equality, Martin Buber reluctantly accepted the formation of the State of Israel in 1948 as necessitated by historical circumstances. Throughout his life, Buber continued to criticize Israel's political leadership for their inability to move from the sphere of power politics to a more creative realm of amicable human relations.

Martin was born in Vienna on 8 February 1878. When he was three years old, his parents' marriage broke up and his mother walked out of the house leaving Martin and his father Karl Buber. Martin was then taken to his grandfather's house in Lemberg, then the capital of the Austrian Galicia. Solomon Buber was a man of learning, a midrash scholar, with a thorough knowledge of Hebrew and a skilled editor of rabbinic works. Salomon Buber was also an influential person in his locality, a leader of the Jewish community in Lemberg and a prominent member of the non-Jewish commercial fraternity. Adele Buber took over much of her husband's responsibilities, in order to leave him free to read and write. It was through his grandmother's love of languages that Martin developed a passion for literature and for linguistic exercises. Martin was at first educated at home and then was sent to the Polish Franz Josef gymnasium in Lemberg.

Amidst a comfortable life in his grandparents' house, Martin was nevertheless overcome by the loss of the company of his mother and eagerly waited for her return, even though neither Solomon nor Adele mentioned his mother's name in any of their conversations. One day, an older girl, who was looking after Martin in the balcony of their house, told Martin that his mother would never come back. Although he ceased to wait for his mother from that moment, the pain of that fateful day stayed with him for ever. The loss of his mother continued to torment him and he would later invent the word *Vergegnung*, mis-encounter, to describe an encounter that should take place, but does not. In his old age, he said: "I suspect that everything I experienced of genuine encounter during the course of my life had its origin in that moment on the balcony."⁴

After schooling in Lemberg, when he was fourteen, Martin went to live with his father Karl Buber, a soft-spoken and kind-hearted man, who devoted his life in farming and breeding of animals. Martin was much

impressed with the way Karl approached people and even the animals around him, greeting not only people but also the horses and cats in a very personal way. Again, it was Karl Buber who introduced his young son to a Zadik, the leader of a Hasidic community in a nearby town. Hasidism was the movement of popular mysticism that arose in the eighteenth century among the Jews of Poland and Ukraine. Alienated from traditional Judaism in his younger days, Martin would re-enter the Jewish world through Hasidism.

In 1896, at the age of eighteen, Martin enrolled himself in the faculty of philosophy of the University of Vienna. Besides learning history of art, psychology, and classical philology, Martin also took interest in the theatre. The third term of his university education was spent at Leipzig, and it was here that Martin came to appreciate Johann Sebastian Bach. It was at Leipzig, again, that Martin along with his friend Aahron Eliasberg, founded the first chapter of the Zionist movement. In 1899 Martin married Paula Winkler, a non-Jewish girl from Munich, who later made a reputation as a writer. Martin seems to have heavily depended on Paula who also helped Martin in his work, shaping some of the roughest pieces of his writings. In 1900, Martin moved to Berlin for further study under Georg Simmel (1850-1918), the noted German sociologist and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1913).

Some time after he finished his studies, Martin Buber came across a document by the founder of Hasidism, the Ba'al Shem Tov. This document opened for Buber the reality of the religiousness of Judaism and he decided to spend some years in seclusion for the sole purpose of studying Hasidism. Hasidism with its mystical learning and its message that God can be seen in everything and reached by every pure deed attracted him. He collected and retold many Hasidic legends. It is not surprising, therefore, that these five years of study saw the publication of some books, namely the *Tales of Rabbi Nachman* (1906), *The Legend of Ba'al-shem* (1908), and *Ecstatic Confessions* (1909). It has, however, to be added that Hasidism remained, for Buber, the touchstone against which the values of Zionist activity were to be tested. Buber felt that Zionism was in critical need of Hasidism's discovery of an inner tie with the world, with the soul, and with God.

After his rendezvous with Hasidism, Martin Buber returned to his work in the Zionist movement. In 1916, he founded the Zionist monthly *Der Jude* and edited it until 1924. In 1913, his book *Daniel* was published, marking the author's transition from Hasidism to existentialism. The significance of *Daniel* is best comprehended in the formula that Buber himself used, "holy insecurity." What is significant is not the insecurity, but the response to it. After a gestation period of about seven years, Buber's masterpiece *I-Thou* finally appeared in a book form in the spring of 1922. In the year 1925, Buber and his friend Franz Rosenzweig undertook the translation of the entire Old Testament from Hebrew into German, a task which Buber would complete in the last years of his life.

Buber's article "Gandhi, Politics, and Us,"⁵ published in 1930, examines Buber's evaluation of Gandhi's attempt to spiritualize politics. Buber's constant question is whether "religion allows itself to be introduced into politics in such a way that a political success can be obtained." Probably not, for "God's love is not measured by success." In Buber's view, if religion withdraws from politics, "it evades its task . . . and if it sinks it to that sphere, then it has lost its soul." Buber appreciated Gandhi's desperate attempt to introduce religion into politics. But Buber himself did not want to follow Gandhi. Buber's only fear was that Gandhi "allies his religion with the politics of others." Buber has sensed that Gandhi was often disheartened by the lethargy of the masses and the inconsistency of his co-workers. And Buber concluded that the tragedy is not one "of an inner contradiction, but that of the contradiction between the unconditionality of a spirit and the conditionality of a situation to which situation precisely the masses of his followers . . . belong."

From 1923 to 1933, Buber taught Jewish philosophy of religion and later the history of religion at the University of Frankfurt. At the same time, he took an active part in Jewish cultural life and lectured at the Frankfurt Judische Lehrhaus directed by Franz Rozenzweig. With the rise of national Socialism, Buber was forced to resign his university chair. Buber's emigration to Palestine had to wait, as he was expecting a position in the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. In the mean time, Buber set up a Central Office for Jewish Adult Education; he himself travelled across Germany conducting courses and giving lectures. His writings and lectures soon become a source of inspiration to the besieged Jewish community in Nazi Germany. Soon, he was barred from speaking in public and at Jewish meetings. At the same time in Jerusalem the Senate decision to appoint Martin Buber to a chair of philosophy was finally ratified. And in March 1938, Martin and Paula left Germany to settle in Jerusalem.

Now in Palestine, Buber could sense the enormity of the terrorism and violence perpetrated by both Jews and Arabs. Buber, however, stood firm in his defence of the Arab rights, continuing the pleas he had made in earlier years. Nevertheless he began to occupy himself with his literary pursuits, and he also started to write in Hebrew. The first book to be published in the Hebrew was *The Prophetic Faith* (1942), an exposition of the religion of the prophets of Israel. With his book *What is Man*, Buber triumphantly entered the field of philosophical anthropology. The book *Moses*, like *Prophetic Faith*, is an account of the relation of the human person to God, specially to the God of Moses. In the years to come, Buber would publish many more books including *Paths in Utopia* (1949), *Two Types of Faith* (1950), and *Eclipse of God* (1953).

Buber's eighth decade was in many ways the richest and busiest in his life. In 1949 he founded a training college for teachers in adult education. In 1951, Buber was awarded the Hanseatic Goethe Prize. By that year he relinquished his university post and was free to travel. He visited the

United States for the first time in 1951. After two years he travelled to Europe and also to London. He also went to Germany to receive the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade. During his last visit to the United States in 1958, his wife Paula died, and Buber was never the same again. His last years, however, were amply rewarded. In 1963 he went to the Netherlands to receive the prestigious Erasmus Prize and in 1965 he received the Albert Schweitzer medal for having exemplified the spirit of reverence for life, the unique message of Albert Schweitzer. Buber died in Jerusalem, at the age of eighty-seven after a fall. On his tombstone are written the words from his favourite psalm (73:23), "Nevertheless, I am with You always."

Cultural Zionism

In the Babylonian exile, the psalmist wrote: "By the water of Babylon we sat down; we wept when we remembered Zion (Ps. 137:1). It is possible that the term "Zion" was first associated with the Davidic monarchy and its capital in Jerusalem and then, later, it might have come to signify the whole land of Israel. The longing for the land of Israel and its religious institutions had been very much alive in the thinking of the Diaspora Jews who made regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem and often paid for the upkeep of the temple. Even after the destruction of the temple in the year 70 A.D., the contact with the ancestral land was maintained. In the medieval period, the spiritual connection to Zion was kept alive primarily through literature and poetry. In course of time, there also developed a Jewish messianism based on the belief that the Messiah would return the Jews to Zion, reestablish the kingdom of David, and rebuild the temple of Jerusalem.

Towards the nineteenth century, the forces of modern nationalism released by the French Revolution awakened national hopes among the Jews throughout Europe. Added to this was the rise of anti-semitism in France, Germany, and Russia which raised serious questions about the prospects of Jewish integration into European society. And the Jewish leaders around the world began to conceive of a Jewish homeland as the only answer to the Jewish question. Thus it was the influence of both the secular nationalism and messianic aspirations of the traditional Jews which accelerated the longing of the Jews for a home in their ancestral land.

Modern Zionism really began with Theodor Herzl (1860-1904). The term "Zionism" was coined by Nathan Birnbaum in 1890 and was adopted by Herzl and his followers at the first Zionist Congress in 1897. At the invitation of Herzl, Buber took over the editorship of *Die Welt*, the official Zionist leaflet and Buber began to attend Zionist meetings, giving lectures in the Congress. In 1921, Buber went as a delegate to the Twelfth Zionist Congress at Karlsbad when he presented a resolution with a plea to the Jews to contribute to the progress of the Arabs, rather than turn them into their enemies. But Buber and his friends, claims Pamela Vermes,⁶ "had little in common with Herzl who knew little and cared less about the

Hebrew language or the artistic, spiritual, and intellectual manifestations of Judaism.” Therefore it is not surprising that Buber found himself in the forefront of the opposition to Herzl’s strictly political conception of the Zionist movement’s priorities. In these circumstances, Buber found Ahad ha-Am’s cultural Zionism closer to his own ideals.

Cultural Zionism, associated with Ahad ha-Am (the pen name of Asher Ginsburg), stood for a distinctive view of Jewish renewal based on the conviction that culture and spirituality are ultimately more significant for the destiny of a people than its political fortunes. Ahad ha-Am (1856-1927) tried to develop a secular Judaism based on certain principles from the Jewish heritage. In his view, the Jewish religion was only one expression of a wider Jewish culture and he advocated cultural renewal as the most urgent Zionist task. He, therefore, urged his followers to adopt a renewal of Jewish culture, by which he meant fostering Hebrew language and literature and Jewish national consciousness and values.

In course of time, Buber would move even beyond Ahad ha-Am’s definition of cultural Zionism. For Buber, culture did not mean simply encouraging Jewish culture, literature, and value system; culture meant something more basic and more spiritual than the external form and expressions of a culture, something deeper than even the culture’s values and more codes. Buber’s conception of culture as primarily an inner spiritual reality only meant that culture is grounded in the soul, as the source of a truly creative life. In this mood Buber urged his fellow Zionists to pursue what he called a politics of culture, meaning the transformation of Jewish consciousness and the renewal of a distinctively Jewish worldview and spiritual sensibility.

I and Thou

In a substantial assemblage of writings dedicated to Buber’s writings, the French existentialist philosopher Gabriel Marcel had written: “I am particularly delighted that their collective tribute to that great thinker, Martin Buber, affords me an opportunity to express my admiration for the priceless little book *I and Thou*.”⁷ This little book *I and Thou* was indeed Buber’s most famous work, the one to which Buber mainly owes much of his reputation. Buber had once told his friend, Franz Rosenzweig, that this book was seven years in gestation before it finally appeared in the year 1922. The language is unique, often running into a sort of prose poetry. The sentiments and thoughts being quite dense, it calls for more than one reading. But the theme comes out clearly that dialogue is the source of real humanity.

Buber’s dialogical philosophy centres around two modes of relation, namely the I-It and the “I-Thou” relation. In the “I-It” mode, which is characterized by goal-oriented, instrumental attitude, the I relates to others in terms of their use and values. The I uses the other for his or her own advantage. The “I-Thou” mode, on the other hand, is characterised by

mutuality, openness, and spontaneity. It is a true dialogue in which the partners speak to one another as equals. The "I-Thou" relation is the relation of realization in which the two parties are subjects, confronting each other as persons, as ends in themselves. Therefore the "I" of "I-Thou" is quite different from the "I" of "I-It." The first I is caught up in exclusive relation, for the Thou can never be one among others; it must always be unique. The "I" of the "I-It" mode, is the I that experiences, assesses, calculates, and uses the other to achieve some end. Nothing of this kind, comes between the "I" and its "Thou." The I cannot say, Thou, until all intermediary thoughts and expectations have disappeared.

However, the "I-It" sphere of rationality and impersonality is neither negative nor evil. It is only through the "I-It" relation that the I receives objective knowledge and technical skill. It is from the It world that the I draws whatever knowledge, judgement, and progress that the I possess and enjoys. This would imply that without the It world, we cannot live because the I-It world finds its expression in knowledge, art, and science. But then Buber would insist that those who live in the world of It alone are not human beings, because, the I of such people, would tend to treat everyone else as objects of observation, of reflection, and of use. In Buber's words, "but he who lives with It alone is not a man."⁸

Buber then points out that these relations occur in three realms. The first is the realm of nature, animate and inanimate, the world of beasts, rocks and elements. Here relation is not with nature, as a whole, as in mystical rapport but individually with an exclusive you. The second realm of potential relation is that of the inter human. When the I confronts another human being as the Thou, the Thou is not a character to be described, or even experienced. "Distinct and all of a piece," the Thou "fills the heaven."⁹ Buber would add that in the human setting, what is at work in every sphere of relation is essentially love. Love, Buber writes, is to be distinguished from feelings of love. "Love is the responsibility of an I for a Thou."¹⁰ The realm of the third sphere of relation is that of "intelligible essences," or "spiritual being." What Buber has in mind is the essence of art, knowledge, and example, both the work of art, music, literature and the pure action of exemplary persons.

One feature of the "I-Thou" relation is, however, its transience. It flows and ebbs and flows back again. The "I-Thou" can easily slip into I-It, when the I tries to assess the other, but once mutuality and openness is gained, I and Thou is restored. The only Thou, which can never become an It, is the everlasting Thou, for the simple reason that we cannot scrutinize it objectively. Buber devotes the last section of his book to the relation between the I and its everlasting Thou. In Buber's view, with each Thou, we can catch a glimpse of the everlasting one.

With every particular Thou, the basic world I-Thou addresses the everlasting Thou. From this mediation of the Thou of all beings, fulfilment of relation

comes to them and unfulfilment. The inborn Thou is realized in each but perfected in none. It is perfected only in immediate relation with that Thou which cannot by nature become an It."¹¹

The eternal Thou or God is present whenever one meets one's fellow human beings or the world as Thou. Eternal Thou is not a symbol for God, but of our relation with God. Thus God is Absolute who becomes a person, so to speak, in order to love and be loved, to know and be known by the human person. This is the paradox of the Biblical God who remains imageless and yet enters into direct relation with us.

Thus we can see that for Buber, life is reciprocity; all life is meeting. The human person knows God only through relationship and only in relationship, God relates to the human person. According to Buber, the manner in which we relate to nature, to fellow human beings, and to the Everlasting Thou determines the quality of our lives. This for Buber is the message of the life of dialogue. Dialogue is not only being aware of the other person, but is something that demands responsibility to the other person and answering the other person from the depths of one's being. Dialogue is therefore based upon a coequal relation where the partners impress upon each other without overpowering the other. However, it is essential that this dialogue has the presence of God as its foundational relation.

The Line of Demarcation

According to Buber, the anguish and distress of the society of his time was due to the radical polarisation of the sacred and secular sphere. We have often noticed religion confining itself comfortably to the ecclesiastical precincts of confessional and ritual purity, and relinquishing all claim on the secular world. Since all of creation is sacred, Buber would contend that the division between the holy and the profane is not ontological. The sacralization of all existence requires that faith in God the creator be extended to our public and political activity. In such a setting, the true challenge of our religious faith would be to affirm life in the broken world of day-to-day life: "We can only work for the Kingdom of God," Buber wrote to Gandhi, "through working on all the spheres." Buber continued to say: "We cannot prepare the messianic world, we can only prepare for it. There is no legitimately messianic . . . politics. But that does not imply that the political sphere may be excluded from the hallowing of all things."¹²

On the one hand, Buber vehemently criticised those people who would work for a political goal, irrespective of the means employed. It is true that what is often accomplished through false means can pass off as truth and what is accomplished through violence can pass off as justice, and for a while the hoax may be successful. Buber would aver that the means should be as pure as the goal. On the other hand, Buber also criticized the intellectual withdrawal from political life; and the doctrinaire idealism which

accompanies this withdrawal. In Buber's view, those who keep aloof from politics, just because politics is ambiguous, are more committed to the purity of their moral ideals than to the task of redeeming the world. Buber was sure that, "if work is to be done in public life, it must be accomplished not above the fray but in it." Buber would agree that contact with the real world will vitiate the purity of our moral principles, but Buber would contend that "the Word is not victorious in its purity but in its corruption; it bears its fruits in the *corruption seminis*."¹³

Buber was indeed aware that it is the real corrupting world that provides the sole possibility for the actualization of moral principles. Therefore Buber would emphasize that we take each situation as unique, with its special nuances, anxiety and experience, memory and hope. In Buber's thinking, ethical ideals must respond to the uniqueness of each situation in order to be effective and meaningful. Ethical principles and ideals ought to function heuristically, exploring the possibility of bringing morality and politics together as much as possible in each situation. Buber rejected ideas disembodied from the situation. For example, Mahatma Gandhi's counsel that the situation of Indians in South Africa was comparable to that of the Jews under Nazism and that the principle of Satyagraha could be just transferred to Germany was, to Buber, a good example of what he would call "barren application."

Buber would opt for descending wholeheartedly with our moral principles into the reality of unclean politics. Aware of our responsibility, we ought to determine the limits of our ethical commands in each situation. This is what Buber calls the drawing of the line of demarcation in every situation, that abstract ethical principles can attain their destiny in concrete reality. Commenting on Buber's line of demarcation, Paul Mendes-Flohr rightly says: "The line of demarcation gains luminosity only within the darkness of each situation. Groping in the dark we marshal all our spiritual strength to reach the line, the line marking the maximal possibilities of truth and justice in that particular hour."¹⁴ Therefore the line of demarcation must be drawn anew in each situation. This would be the only way to guard our ethical principles within the reality of hard life. At every point the line of demarcation should be pushed as far as possible towards truth and justice.

In Buber's view, morality and politics meet in what he calls the life matrix. Positive intermingling of morality and politics produces, for Buber, prophetic politics. Otherwise there is only power politics, and Buber claims that those who are power-hungry oppose prophetic politics. Speaking on this Buber said: "The Hebrew prophet invariably receives only a message for a particular situation. . . . He sets no universally valid image of perfection. . . ."¹⁵ Therefore the character of the sacred-profane combination is determined by each particular life situation. And we should act to bring together morality and politics with their respective dimensions of the ontologically sacred. Thus we see that, between the politician's cynical

acceptance of our imperfect world and the empty purity of those adhering to strict abstract principles, Buber is advocating a third way. Politics, according to Buber, should be affirmed by the religious people. They should first seek to preserve the tension between the absolute moral value and the imperfect world. The next step would be to enter the world and seek to actualize the moral value within the limits of a given situation.

GANDHI: THE POLITICIAN OF SOUL FORCE

Gandhi was often asked whether he was a saint or a politician. On one occasion, Gandhi replied that the word "saint" is too sacred to be lightly applied to someone like him, "a humble searcher after truth, who knows his limitations, makes mistakes. . . ." But then Gandhi continued to say: "The politician in me has never dominated a single decision of mine. If I seem to take part in politics, it is only because politics encircles us like the coil of a snake from which one cannot get out. . . . I wish to wrestle with the snake."¹⁶ This humble seeker after truth would call his life story as *The Story of My Experiments with Truth* as experiments in the spiritual field. As he explain in his *Autobiography*,¹⁷

My experiments in the political field are now known not only in India but to a certain extent to the "civilized" world. For me they have not much value. . . . But I should certainly like to narrate my experiments in the spiritual field, which are known only to myself and from which I have derived such power as I possess for working in the political field.

Even as a young boy, little Mohandas was averse to telling lies or resorting to unfair methods. When he was a student at the Rajkot High School, the Education Inspector was visiting the Institution. In an English test on spelling given by the teacher, Mohandas was the one to fail, just for misspelling the word "kettle." The teacher had tried to prompt the twelve-year old Mohandas to copy from a nearby student, but it did not work out. When the teacher called him after the inspector had left, and berated him for disgracing the school and the teacher himself, Mohandas had no answer to give him, except to tell his inner self that he could never learn the art of copying. "One thing took deep root in me," Gandhi would write in his *Autobiography*, "the conviction that morality is the basis of things and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole object."

At the age of eighteen, Gandhi opted to go to England to study law. His decision to go overseas was initially prompted by his curiosity and eagerness for adventure. But the three years' stay in England proved to be a liberating experience for Gandhi and was crucial for his intellectual growth. He made many friends both from the Theosophical Society and from the circle of vegetarian friends. Through these friends, Gandhi read the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Bible*, and Edwin Arnold's, *The Light of Asia* and he tried to unify the teachings of the *Gita*, *The Light of Asia*, and the *Sermon on the Mount*. He

went to England looking for the knowledge that had made Britain so powerful and strong, and came back convinced that India had ample spiritual resources in its ancient Scriptures. Paradoxically, it was this discovery of his own tradition and culture that constituted Gandhi's greatest debt to the West.

When Gandhi returned from England, he was invited by a firm to assist them as their legal adviser for a year in South Africa. Although Gandhi successfully negotiated an amicable settlement for this firm, he decided to stay back, sensing the helplessness of the Indian community who suffered innumerable unjust treatments from the South African government. These years were filled with continuing struggles and resistance to the various injustices meted out to the Indians. These years in South Africa was also a period of profound evolution in Gandhi's commitment and dedication to this work. It was here that he devised what was to become his life's gospel, namely Satyagraha or holding on to truth which became the dominant theme of his life's endeavour. Again, it was in South Africa that Gandhi experimented with Ashram life. In the beginning these ashrams in Phoenix and then at Tolstoy were refuelling stations and rehearsal grounds for Satyagrahis, but soon they became centres for community living. Gandhi seems to have found his identity as a reformer and leader mobilising the Indian minority for their rights. South Africa, indeed, became a training ground for the political activity that was to occupy Gandhi for the rest of his life.

Looking back on his long twenty-one years in South Africa, Gandhi remarked that he had a world of friends among the Jews. Henry Polak and Hermann Kallenbach were Gandhi's closest friends. But they were themselves so alienated from their Jewish heritage that they never attempted to interpret the high ideals of Judaism to their Hindu mentor. Gandhi's Christian friends in South Africa, however, engaged him in dialogue, and it was essentially through them that he was exposed to the Old Testament,¹⁸ a term itself loaded with Christian bias. The Jewish scholar Gideon Shimoni,¹⁹ therefore, rightly observes that "Gandhi saw Judaism essentially through Christian spectacles," and that "he perceived Judaism on Christian terms." By 1938, Gandhi had received many letters asking him to declare his view about the Arab-Jewish question in Palestine and the persecution of Jews in Germany. At the urging of Kallenbach and others, Gandhi finally published the controversial article "The Jews" in the *Harijan* of 26 November 1938. Evidently, Gandhi was much disturbed by what he had written, because on the very same day he wrote to Kallenbach thus: "You will have seen my article on the Jews. I have made a plunge into unknown waters. How I wish you were here at this time. . . ."²⁰

Gandhi was probably naive in counselling the Jews in Germany to offer Satyagraha to the Nazi regime; the advice, however, was not due to any insensitivity or lack of sincerity but to Gandhi's strong conviction in the efficacy of soul force. In Gandhi's view, nonviolence is the very essence

of soul force, because it is the result of a spiritual commitment to the sacredness of all life and the unity of all created life. He could claim that "nonviolence is an active force . . . it is soul force or the power of Godhead within us."²¹ He would often equate nonviolence with the Christian notion of sacrificial love, and in course of time, nonviolence was way of life for Gandhi. His uniqueness was that he was able to extend the principle of nonviolence from the individual to the social and political sphere. Because of Gandhi's effective application of nonviolence on a large scale in the political field, Raghavan Iyer could claim that the "very word 'nonviolence' has passed into the vocabulary of politics."²²

By the time Gandhi returned to India in 1915, the Indian National Congress had been active in their quest for national independence. There were several occasions for Gandhi, however, to test out his principle of Satyagraha in the Indian context. The Rowlatt Bills with their powers of arbitrary arrest and detention without trial was the first occasion. But it led to the infamous order of General Dyer to shoot into a crowd at Amritsar. This event came to be a great and symbolic punctuation mark in Indo-British relations. A shock wave went through the entire country and Gandhi never truly trusted the Raj again. In 1930 came Gandhi's famous Salt march to the sea, publicly to violate the salt monopoly of the British Government. From then on, the story of the Mahatma was one of recurrent campaigns, arrests, imprisonments, and releases. But Gandhi was not alone. There were some intellectuals who made considerable sacrifices in following Gandhi. There was Vallabhai Patel the prosperous Ahmedabad lawyer, Rajendra Prasad from Bihar, Rajagopalachari from Madras, and the aristocrat Nehrus from Allahabad. Gandhi, also for the first time, brought different sections of Indian society into the forefront of politics. Gandhi's moral influence on these people coming from different strata of Indian society, was indeed astonishing.

Gandhi saw in the Indian freedom struggle the greatest experiment with truth. It is not sure whether Gandhi expected political success through religious interventions as Martin Buber claims in his critique of Gandhi's introduction of religion into politics. In his political endeavour, Gandhi was immensely influenced by Bhagavadgita's emphasis on *anasaktiyoga* the principle of engaging oneself in activity without any expectation of or attachment to the fruit of the action. While describing the ideals significant in Gandhi's philosophy, Paul Power²³ includes the "devotion to *anasaktiyoga* as the best way to pursue the ultimate." But, then, Gandhi believed that political success would be an outward expression of an inner transformation. In fact, Gandhi would not have wanted any political success without an inner change. He often advised people to practise Satyagraha as an expression of their inner conviction. Further, Gandhi was insistent that if the method of Satyagraha was to be in accordance with the demands of truth, it had to be effective and practical. Further, "If any action of mine claimed to be spiritual is proved to be unpractical, it must be pronounced

as a failure. I do believe that the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term."²⁴

On the day India achieved its independence, Gandhi did not participate in the celebrations. At the time of the glorious climax of his struggle, Gandhi was in deep agony seeing the bloodshed which the partitioning of India had caused. The Hindu-Muslim unity was the one issue that evaded Gandhi all his life. Some highly-strung orthodox Hindu youth saw Hinduism menaced by its contact with Islam. It was one such person, Nathuram Godse, a journalist from Pune, who shot Gandhi, as he was going to the usual prayer meeting on the evening of 30 January 1948. Gandhi's last words were, "he Ram" (O God). Reporting on Gandhi's death, the *New York Times*²⁵ wrote: "Gandhi has left as his heritage a spiritual force that must in God's time prevail over arms and armaments and dark doctrines of violence. The rest remains for history's inexorable hand to write down."

The Political Goal of Swaraj

Gandhi used the term "Swaraj" to express the idea of the freedom he longed to attain for the Indian sub-continent. "Swaraj" meant self-rule, and it meant much more than independence from the British Raj. In Gandhi's view, Indians should get freedom from the disunity and ignorance that had enslaved them to the British for nearly two centuries. Gandhi believed that if each person followed truth, India would be ready for "Swaraj" in the real sense. Swaraj, in Gandhi's thinking, was based on inner freedom. He maintained that "the outward freedom . . . that we shall obtain will be in exact proportion to the inward freedom . . . our chief energy must be concentrated upon reaching reform from within."²⁶ Swaraj would then include truth and justice, enabling a status of security for everyone in the country. Gandhi was sure that "while service is the highest expression of religion, service to the motherland would be the best religion."²⁷

If "Swaraj" is to be real, Gandhi insisted, the means for attaining it must be pure and he recommended nonviolence as the path to national freedom. For Gandhi, means are more important than the goal since we have control only over the means. Further, Gandhi claimed that "our progress towards the goal will be in exact proportion to the purity of our means."²⁸ In fact, means and ends are convertible terms in Gandhi's thinking. For, means are only ends-in-process or ends-in-the making. In *Hind Swaraj* he wrote: "The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree."²⁹

Gandhi's soul politics was to transform India into *Ramrajya*, kingdom of God on earth. By *Ramrajya*, kingdom of Rama, Gandhi meant the legendary kingdom of peace, justice, and prosperity established by Rama.

Gandhi explained, "whether the Rama of my imagination ever lived or not on this earth, the ancient ideal of Ramrajya is undoubtedly one of true democracy in which the meanest citizen could be sure of swift justice without an elaborate and costly procedure."³⁰ Asked why he defined Swaraj as ramrajya, Gandhi replied, "I defined swaraj as Ramraj as I often do, because it is a graphic description for a moral government based upon truth and nonviolence, in other words, universal religion."³¹

Satyagraha as Dialogue

The term "Satyagraha" as a combination of the Sanskrit words *satya* and *agraha* stands for the firmness that results in insisting on truth. In Gandhi's words, "Satyagraha then is literally holding on to Truth and it means therefore Truth force. Truth is soul or spirit. . . . It is therefore known as soul force."³² Although "Satyagraha" was used to describe the civil disobedience and non-cooperation, Gandhi soon made it into a whole philosophy of life. In Gandhi's thinking, "Satyagraha" was also *dharma yuddha* which demands of its adherents, courage, sincerity, depth of purpose, and faith in God. Satyagraha was also an ideology of action, to be used effectively in the political and social arena. As a way of life, Satyagraha encompasses both truth and nonviolence.

Thus Gandhi's Satyagraha discarded all forms of violence. When violence is used, it becomes a monologue, because the person who uses violence does not relate to the victim; rather the victim is dehumanised and made into a thing. On the other hand, nonviolence is a dialogue because, in the use of nonviolence, the opponent is respected and is often consulted. For example, before launching any civil disobedience, Gandhi always gave advance notice of his course of action. He believed that reliance on secrecy leads to cowardice and fear and that it inflates real differences to the point where they appear impassable. Thus nonviolence places human relationship in a creative context of growth and development. Inasmuch as nonviolence involves mutual exchange, Satyagraha can be said to encompass the underlying thrust of Martin Buber's philosophy of dialogue.

Because of his philosophy of Satyagraha, Gandhi always differentiated between people and institutions. If the British empire was an enemy because of its colonial rule, it did not mean that Gandhi could not like the people of Britain. In fact, many English persons were his close colleagues. Even in his first visit to London, he made friends with members of the Vegetarian and Theosophical societies. During the freedom struggle, two of his closest friends were Charles Andrews and Madeleine Slade. Thus Gandhi was able to transform the political situation of a conflict between these two nations into a dialogue. For all the outward struggle during the Indian independence movement, the result was a harmonious transformation of relationship between England and India.

Religion and Truth

By religion, Gandhi meant the true religion which transcends Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, and all other religions. In Gandhi's view, it is this one true and perfect religion which harmonizes the different particular religions and gives them reality. He declared: "Even as a tree has a single trunk but many branches and leaves, so there is one true and perfect religion, but it becomes many, as it passes through the human medium. The one Religion is beyond all speech."³³ Therefore the particular religions, being human expressions, cannot embody the ultimate religion. But, then, they are necessary, in order to convey to humans some measure of that perfect Religion. Thus all religions possess truth, but because they are human constructs, they will be to some extent erroneous.

God, in Gandhi's opinion, is Truth. Thus Gandhi did not envision a personal God, but experienced God as an Unseen Power, which is changeless, and yet pervades all things and holds all things together. At one point he reversed his statement God is Truth and maintained that Truth is God, because even the atheist is in search for truth. In this connection he said that the nearest approach to Truth is through love in the form of *ahimsa*. The only way to serve God, Gandhi declared, is through service to people. "I am endeavouring to see God through the service of humanity; for, I know that God is neither in Heaven, nor down below, but in everyone."³⁴

Since Gandhi equates God with Truth, it is a corollary that absolute truth is not possible for the human person to know. Gandhi often said that he had occasional glimpses of truth and yet never found it. Gandhi, therefore, came to distinguish between absolute truth and relative truth. All that is available to the human person is relative truth. Relative truth cannot be identified with absolute truth, but relative truth is necessary to convey the meaning of absolute truth. And absolute truth becomes an indicator for any person in the pursuit of relative truth. Gandhi wrote: "as long as I have not realized this absolute Truth, so long must I hold by the relative truth as I have conceived it. That relative truth must in the meanwhile be my beacon, my shield and buckler."³⁵

CONCLUSION

Lokamanya Tilak told Mahatma Gandhi in 1918: "Truth has no place in politics." Further, in a letter to *Young India*, he wrote: "Politics is a game of worldly people and not of Sadhus."³⁶ The question is whether politics can be pursued by religious persons. And is it possible to introduce religious and ethical values into politics? Both Gandhi and Buber seem to have struggled with these questions. Buber was forthright in saying that if religion enters politics, "it is threatened by evaporation in the rapid fire of political activity."³⁷ In Buber's view, politics cannot be avoided, but we must deal with it without inflexible principles, in naked responsibility.

Buber sees an inflexibility of principle in Gandhi, and this is the tragedy that he is referring to. Although Buber is emphatic that the tragedy be honoured, Buber himself does not want to follow Gandhi.

According to Buber, the meeting of morality and politics depends on each situation. We need to determine the limit of the ethical command in that particular context. The line of demarcation will mark the maximal possibility of truth and justice in that situation. Thus the line of demarcation has to be drawn anew in each case. For Gandhi, the answer lies in recognising that absolute truth is not available to the human person and that one had to depend on relative truth. What Gandhi would do is to keep on holding on to the relative truth, all the while keeping in mind that life is still informed by the spirit of the unrealizable absolute truth.

It looks as though neither Gandhi nor Buber gives us any clear-cut answers to the problem of the politics-morality combination. Any method of reconciling religion and politics looks very fragile in the light of the hard realities of the political and social life. There is still a wide gap between politics and morality. However, both Buber and Gandhi seem to be conscious of some spiritual current, flowing underneath the apparent contradiction. While recognising a moral dilemma in their attempt to relate religion to politics, precisely at that point, Buber and Gandhi see a divine response. The readers participate in this response.

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Nonviolence and Non-Dualism as Bases of Ecological Ethics

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Some Preliminary Remarks

THE FOCUS FOR this essay is India, the home of nonviolence ethics and non-dualist metaphysics, now facing a grave ecological crisis. Our topic is being dealt with in two complementary and mutually adapted ways: (i) as an exposition of the theory of nonviolence (*ahimsa*) and the teachings of non-dualist Vedanta, both of which have been decisively influential in determining the spiritual as well as the ethical outlook of the region; (ii) as an exploration of these sources further for clues not clearly manifest in expressed literature but which could prove to be helpful in cognitating the matter on hand, namely the ethical dimension in ecology, not just for that region but for the world.

By "ecology" we imply something much more than this cold word ending in "logy," like in biology and other sciences, suggest, for we imply also a struggle that has spiritual and ethical dimensions, for saving and preserving all forms of life on earth and for restoring the whole physical environment of the earth to health to that end. But the task is immense. There is the problem of breaking through many barriers, some of which are in ourselves. The instruments that should be of help are seldom what they promise to be, and, are often found to be at work on the other side. This, however, is the case with all things human. It is a warfare against the fate itself, involving more than flesh and blood but all kinds of demonic structures.

Yet, as we can discern now, there are some bright touches in the picture, stemming from the fact that human consciousness is on a stretch, as it happens when it meets with epochal emergencies. Accordingly, there

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are some signs of notional transformation, if not, ontologically, at least in vague aesthetic terms, such that things physical seem to move towards life, and life towards being—although all these take place rather tenuously and within the fickle framework of human mentality. That mentality will always remain our last obstacle, and it is the strongest ally of adverse fate. Nevertheless, if the human being is other than it is, the world would have to be other than it is; and if both were other than they are, there will be no ground for existence as we know it, and no ground for any thought, including thought concerning ours and the earth's ecological fate—and no need either.

Now that such thought is claiming our attention, an order of questions pertaining to the fact that there is a world, which in our terms is this earth, is beginning to simmer in our minds, although as yet it is but poorly formulated. These are questions pertaining to the earth and to its life forms, of which we are increasingly aware of ourselves as being part. Re-evaluation of the earth and the forms of life upon the earth is becoming linked with the contemplation of our own existence in a new way. We feel constrained to find meaning within the bounds of this relation in such a way as will transform our knowledge of both sides of this relation. And in respect of both sides we have traditionally assumed the presence of purpose, upon which the quest for meaning could come to rest, and reversely, draw from. However, stern senses of purpose are dissolving and the concept of accident is taking over. And yet there is our inexorable desire to see that the accidents that happen are in our favour rather than otherwise, the ghost of purpose still lingers—and that is our good fortune. And we seek to discern meaning under conditions so determined. There is, then, an implicit union of purpose and accident which makes quests for meaning necessary as well as possible.

In respect of our present overwhelming concern, that is, ecology, ethics is very much contingent upon meaning, and it turns out to be the theory and practice of the ways in which meaning can be restored to our vision of the world, and concretely, to the earth as the soil and home of life, all kinds of life, which are fortuitously present, and whose meaning must be a matter of gratuitous generation—transcending even values. It increasingly appears as the ambience of our own existence. That ambience is the essence of what, in seemingly neutral language, we call environment, but in a rather comprehensive sense. The ecological task will entail the abolition of whatever separates us from the environment with a clear need to establish a continuum, so that the good that we aim at in the restoration of meaning will be seen to be identical with what Aristotle in the very opening sentence of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, speaks of as “the good at which *all things aim*,” implicit in every art, every inquiry, every action and pursuit. And we will apply to ecology Aristotle's own description of “master art,” especially appropriate for our times; and hence ethics, to echo what we have already

said, will be the theory and practice of this master art. However, one lesson that even great systems have not assimilated themselves with respect to such a master art as this, but we are forced to learn on our own, is that we have to strive constantly to relate it to the world as it is, and go about it with portentous visions of where in the course of events what will be merged with what ought to be, and where they go apart, so that our ethical efforts will not be undermined without our being prepared to regroup.

We said that ethics in ecology is very much contingent on the meaning of the earth and of the life it holds. This is true of all systems including non-dualist Vedanta. In the latter, there are certain special features which must be considered—and we will do so in some detail. But before we turn to it, let us consider the general background in which we do our thinking. That thinking is on the whole affirmative, emotively, with regard to the meaning question but does not go deeper. We assume that kind of answer to this question because we live on the earth which is a unique condition of existence without any conceivable alternative. This assumption, however, is natural as well as wholesome. Actually, it is but a naturalistic—and natural—version of, though not generally connected with, the Genesis declaration that the creator, having made the earth and everything in it “saw that they were good, very good.” In both cases there is a limiting of the scope of existence to the finite and to the non-eternal. And such limit held to is one of the two opposing sides necessary for the very dialectic of meaning—and of ethics too. The other side is the infinite and eternal which may be invoked as reference. In the different religious traditions the two sides are interrelated differently. The Genesis tradition has its own unique way. In the naturalistic, which is also the natural, mode of thinking, exclusive and more decisive assumptions pertaining to the finite and non-eternal prevail because the earth and life on it are viewed as finite and non-eternal, while nothing other is known, and consequently conceptions of the good come to rest on themselves alone, functioning as the prevailing kinds of affirmation. But such affirmations have taken very different turns, including what has produced in Nietzsche the life-affirming will to power. However, this attitude has on the whole found safe haven in modes of positivism, which have today become part of our universal mental constitution, showing up in very powerful ways in the realm of ecology too. This, as we have observed, is wholesome too in comparison with some alternatives which we may not name at present. Such a predisposition attuned to various functionally positivist mental make-ups is universally pervasive, and the South Asian region is not exempt. Nevertheless, it is easy to see that in the cultural region which we call South Asia, there are certain unique traditions of accounting for the world, and consequently of approaching the question of the meaning of the cosmos and of the phenomenon of life. We will turn to that tradition, of which the most powerful expression is non-dualist Vedanta.

The Issue of the Cosmos and its Meaning in Non-Dualist Vedanta

In non-dualism, there have been from the beginning two main streams of thought on the subject of the world, within which is placed the concrete case of the earth and its meaning. One of them is affirmative, based on an account of the cosmos as a whole, while the other is neither affirmative nor negative. The original spokesman for the former is the paradigmatic figure of the Upanishads, Yajñavalkya, who too expressed some ideas in respect of the latter stream. But it was the later paradigmatic figure of the tradition, Śaṅkara, the historic creator of non-dualism, who developing the latter to its fullness, integrated the two, placing the latter inside the former, and yet without destroying it.

The first of the two is based on the concept of "the imperishable,"¹ later called "imperishable Brahman"—*aksara-brahma*.² It has remained a doctrine of theological affirmation of the order of the cosmos as a whole. In fact, the cosmos here is the same boundless, mythological one that prevailed in the earliest phase of the Vedas and has continued all the way through the epics, *puranas* and all the endless variety of Indian sacred and secular texts. All Indian astronomy, as also earth, mineral, plant, and medical sciences have been developed on the basis of it, and all of them subtly integrated into one super science. In this cosmos the earth has its assigned place. There the world truly exists as well as all life in the world, and all are secure because of the divine order.

The locus classicus of this view, as already indicated, is in the *Bṛhadaranyaka Upanishad* where Yajñavalkya spells it out to the celebrated lady Gargi who questioned him on everything and spared him no intellectual pains. At the conclusion, he declares: "That, O Gargi, the knowers of Brahman call the imperishable

... Verily, at the command of that imperishable, the sun and moon stand in their appointed stations. At the command of that imperishable. O Gargi, heaven and earth stand in their appointed stations. At the command of that imperishable, O Gargi, moments, hours, days and nights, months, seasons and years stand in their appointed stations. At the command of that imperishable, O Gargi, some rivers flow to the east from the snowy mountains and others to the west in whatsoever direction.³

This and the many attendant declarations have served for Śaṅkara as a basis for an elaborate and acute cosmological argument for the existence of God. Much use is made of the design and order of nature to drive home the point that everything in the universe follows a fixed order, and that would be impossible were there is not a conscious, transcendent ruler. The point is repeated several times.⁴ Here, there is an implicit assumption that the cosmos actually exists—which would have been needless to make explicit—and that the infinite capacities of its various parts are designed to serve the common good of all beings, who are users thereof, giving expression to a position that will find resonance with Aristotle.

Now, Sankara leads this doctrine, a very theological one, to a point where he links it up with what has been known as the typical non-dualist doctrine about the world, namely *Maya*. That linking can be seen in his comment on the last passage bearing on the imperishable Brahman. Non-dualist Vedanta has always been associated with the *Maya* doctrine. Sure enough, many scholars have found honest difficulty with it, inasmuch as at least in general perception it discounts the world and abrogates its status as a real entity. And, naturally, everything in the world too must suffer some high degree of ontological deprivation as a consequence. Even since Ramanuja, who came three centuries later (11th-12th centuries A.D.), it has been subjected to severe criticism within India; and in modern times, criticism has come from everywhere. And in the present-day concern with the destiny of the earth and in the light of the stupendous influence non-dualism has had in India. Although the *Maya* doctrine itself may not have had any particular influence, there have been very critical assessments of the role it played in the affairs of Indian society. None of this is due to want of goodwill or lack of knowledge.

A not very surprising point may be made: while this doctrine, spelt out by Sankara is vast and intricate, it still retains concepts of a divine being—*Īśvara*—who in effect is personal and under whose true superintendence and lordship subsists the universe—as in fact do the souls. He shows this to be the case at the point where he connects the doctrine of imperishable Brahman with it, declaring that *Maya* is an instrument (*upadhi*) of the divine being, whose eternal and infinite knowledge is manifested thereby. He speaks of what we know as nature (with law and order for its mark) as in its internal essence nothing but the *Maya* power of all-knowing God.⁵

So far we have been giving an exposition of non-dualist Vedanta, especially with the issue of the cosmos and its meaning in mind, but, as we promised at the beginning, let us now turn to make an exploration of the sources for clues to the ultimate ethical question not manifest in the expressed literature. We undertake that below.

Exploration of the Sources for New Clues

Any useful exploration of thought must follow their seemingly straight lines in their refraction, which is where clues are found: There are many transitions in any great system, and the truth is often hidden in the transitions. And transition implies refraction. Here we follow the method of judging from the resultant positions, which point as much to what lies ahead as to what went before in the making of the transition.

A transition is noted from the theologically coherent doctrine of imperishable Brahman to the radical doctrine of *Maya* which gives a different account of the world. We may also employ the maxim that when it comes to reality, if one cannot think of all things within the situation together, one cannot come to a resolution in thinking of anything. All of

Śankara's thought involves the basic question of the essence of reality in this manner. And he meets the matter head on.

The issue of the cosmos, even in its theologically instituted form, especially in that form, would imply the problem of the potential infinity of all things, generally conceived formally in terms of space, which is the natural candidate for it. In order to get a hold of the cosmos in any way, the movement towards potential infinity in all things must be folded back into themselves—folded back and pegged down. Śankara does it with the aid of the concept of the self—and does it under three denotations of the self but all as present together: as the individual self, as God, and as the Absolute.

That would seem to be the condition for inquiring into the meaning of the fact that there is a cosmos, of which in terms of the first denotation of the self—as individual—we beings in the cosmos are distributively the center of perception. And, as an aside, let me say this: contrary to general belief, non-dualism does not lead us on to path of solipsism, and it has no difficulty with plurality of subject-selves—and this plurality must be ultimately resolved in the unity of the Absolute (one without a second), not in any individual subject-self.

The primary question with regard to the cosmos is not whether it exists—and as an operational, functional actuality it indeed does (hence called *vyaṁbhāra*)—but what the fact that it so exists means. The non-dualist position is that meaning is a product of reference to the transcendent, which is the ultimate source of it as the truth which holds it. This is contained in the very expression, *paramārtha satya*, that is, truth that holds ultimate meaning, not just “ultimate-reality” as usually translated. From the non-dualist point of view, it is impossible to see how meaning for the cosmos can be attained in any other way. Mere affirmation of the fact that the world exists, which is the normal way of positivism, and affirmation as an act of existence in terms of life, or value, recommended by Nietzsche, express very influential contemporary positions, with which non-dualism, however, does not resonate.

Meaning arrives by way of questioning existence. The *Maya* doctrine can be viewed as a radical means for doing that. The original application of this doctrine is for grasping the meaning of there being a world that all experience, and is based on a three-way relation between the transcendent reference, the world, and the subjects-selves who wish to realize it. That there could have been no world is a possibility embedded in the very fact that there is one. The meaning question, which requires us to go that deep, is to be approached on the basis of a principle such as *Maya*—stated to be not definable as such [reference] nor as other⁶—which balances both the fact that there is a world and the possibility that there could have been no world. But the balance is tipped by a resolution that unites purpose with accident. There is a whole range of things that enables such a resolution. In non-dualist Vedānta it is the act of the omniscient God who uses also the

subsidiary cosmic principle of the unseen moral factor, *adr̥ṣṭa*, which is the cumulative product of all *karmas*, wherein also purpose and accident are united in a subordinate way.

At this point of our discussion on the issue of the cosmos in non-dualist Vedanta, we must move over to that for which this has been a ground preparation, namely ethics pertaining to the preservation of the cosmos which boils down to ecological ethics. In the broader sense, this latter is cosmo-ethics, but, in so far as our experience and transactions are restricted to the earth, in actual fact, cosmo ethics will serve merely as a disposition of ground principles. And, in any case, all Indian ecological ethics is by virtue of vision and conception cosmic in character. The difference between the two is merely academic. Now, the main ethical principle for all Indian systems in either sense, wholeheartedly shared by non-dualist Vedanta, is *ahimsa*, poorly translated as "nonviolence." So, we will now turn to that.

Ahimsa (Nonviolence) Ethics

First of all, let us say this: Nonviolence ethics is itself a very powerful way of acknowledging the fact that the world as it undoubtedly exists has meaning, is no illusion, no mere appearance, but is the realm of choice between right conduct according to *dharma* and wrong conduct antithetical to it. In respect of the moral imperatives of ecology, with which in some inescapable sense we are confronted, such conduct has to be defined in terms of preserving, according to some divine dispensation, both the treasure that is life, which means all beings that subsist in the earthen vessel, and the earthen vessel which holds it, unto the end of liberation that should occur outside the limits of time—and unto that end let all beings be preserved and let all persevere. So, then, for all Indian systems the earth itself is to be kept from decay because it is the theater of salvation; and nothing ever offers a greater validation for the world than this.

Now, the enquiry as to where and in which branch of the Indian tradition, Vedic, Jaina, or Buddhist, the *ahimsa* principle was first discovered seems to have no relevance for the matter on hand. But one of the amazing facts of Indian religions is that they share a core ethic, of which, again, the manifest center is *ahimsa*. It can be truly said that whereas metaphysics divides the Indian systems, ethics unites them on a certain basis.

As for the source of all things Indian, namely the Veda, it is true, the existence of the concept of *ahimsa* has to be drawn from the places it prohibits its opposite, that is, *himsa*, destruction, injury, harm, intended in certain acts, called *sneya*. The most explicit enunciation of *ahimsa*, no doubt, is to be found in the Jaina and Buddhist literatures, especially in the former. M. Hiriyanna observes entirely correctly: "The doctrine of *ahimsa*, is no doubt very old in India, but the way in which it is made to pervade the whole conduct is peculiarly Jain."⁷

There is no doubt that much interesting information on the concept can be gathered by searching the source texts of non-dualist Vedanta as well.

But our interest is limited to the ecological question, in which respect a certain passage in the *Chandogya Upanishad* stands out. This passage explicitly lays out the principle of conducting oneself *ahimsa*-wise towards all beings (*ahimsan sarva-bhutani*) and speaks of one having to so comport oneself through the entire life (*sa khalu evam varitayan yavad ayusam*), although as one of the conditions for final freedom from the re-birth cycle.

Clearly, there are several issues which must be resolved in this, but for us at present that of conducting oneself *ahimsa*-wise towards all beings will have to take precedence above all. The link between *ahimsa* and "all beings" is of paramount importance. The phrase "all beings" (*sarva-bhutani*) occurs first in one of the creation hymns, associated with the cosmic person, *purusa*,⁸ where it is said that all beings were generated from his lowest fourth quarter, when he was sacrificed by the lesser gods. And from then on, the phrase appears countless times in literature, so that it clearly is the basis for considering what the world, specifically the earth, is as well as for what beings are.

Let us focus briefly on the word for "being" here—*bhuta*. There are two principal words for "being," especially in non-dualist literature, conveying very different connotations, at least for the most part. These are *sat* (which we shall translate as "Being," with a capital "B") and *bhuta* ("being" with a lower case "b"). The former should, strictly speaking, be reserved for the Absolute, that is, Brahman, though in practice not always is: the latter is used for everything else, most of all the five fundamental elements—*panca-bhuta*—as well as all living beings (creatures). Now, it is very significant that Sankara who defines *bhuta* (being), writes: [It] "points to its groundedness, in the primacy of life, of both moving and stationary creatures, especially in connection with the precept of *ahimsa* towards all beings."⁹

In the Indian tradition, that which comes to be, that is, *bhuta*, is a very important concept of being. The word is from *bhu*, "to be," "to come to be." The most common word for each, *bhuh*, *bhumi*, with a number connected words, is also from this root. The earth is the ground upon which beings occur, that is, beings whose defining essence is life, *jiva* (same as *yiva*, *zoe*). The destiny of survival—*sur-viva*, *ati-jiv*, as with individuals, so with species, is not a special gift granted by some unjustly constituted law of nature, as expressed by the doctrine of the survival of the fittest, morally grotesque as it, made even more so by people like Nietzsche, but is the essence of life that is being.

Life offers a very special kind of situation for being, by which the essence of morality—*dharma*—is defined. Life itself is perishable, but its essence, that is, being is not, a fact which gives no excuse for the destruction of life, but, on the contrary, mandates a *sui generis* reason for its preservation, not so much that the movement to preserve it redounds on the mover as that it validates the fact that being is carried by life. The connection between being and life is not within the power of any mortal being to

break, for the reason, among others, that it is not within the power of any mortal being to make. This is one of the grounds of *ahimsa*.

But let us have one thing made clear. All ethics in the non-dualist Vedantic and other traditions is in a profound sense propounded for the conduct of living beings, paradigmatically, human beings, towards other beings, that is, even in its cosmic character. It operates within the extended moment of preservation (*sthiti*) as the law of preservation. What is beyond that does not fall within ethics, and that we must not discuss here. In non-dualist Vedanta, as in some other systems, it will be theology and eschatology.

Non-dualism, in fact the whole of Vedanta, raised *ahimsa* to the highest place, as the supreme ground of ethics, described in many places as the ultimate *dharma*—*ahimsa paramo dharmah*—and in such a way that in effect even principles which are coordinate with it, like truth (*satya*), seem to be enfolded in it. However, even so, it is not made to rest on itself—inasmuch as ethics cannot—but as we have tried to point out, it is contingent on meaning, and meaning in turn is always an occurrence referential to that which is transcendent. And ethics, even in the shape of *ahimsa*, is contingent upon meaning. For our vision of what ecology is all about from the non-dualist point of view this insight seems to be decisive. In fact, it is what will enable unconditional cooperation with other traditions of *ahimsa*, also with all the attempts to think on the ecological issue, even when ethics may erroneously be viewed as something founded on itself. That goes for all secular thinking too.

It need not be said that all branches of the Indian religious tradition share the commitment to *ahimsa*, although our present discussion was concentrated on the non-dualist Vedantic branch of it. And it is well known that it is in Jainism that it has been given the most central place, not as a companion to doctrines of spiritual life but in essence as the hub of spiritual life, inasmuch as it is the quintessence of the ethical, that is, in the sense of the cosmo-ethical. And there one's behaviour towards all life forms is elaborately discussed and prescribed. To a considerable extent these discussions and prescriptions are to be found also in the epics and *puranas* of the mainstream of the Indian tradition, through which all Vedanta, especially the non-dualist, continues to flow.

It may be said that in the original conception of ethics, including *ahimsa*, as we find in Śaṅkara most of all, the action or behavioural part of it is dependent on the contemplative, or knowledge, base of it, and as such is an expression. And the base is where all the metaphysical problems, pertaining to the world, first of all, have been resolved, and as we have shown, where meaning, has been firmly set in its place. It may be argued that the way from so far down to the surface, which is where action in the sense of positive action is necessitated, is long; and as for the resultant while it may not lose the name of action it may lose the essence of power.

This fear is not extraneous, but it can be dispelled. However, that is not part of our present undertaking.

We agree that the power factor to motivate action is most important. In the case of *ahimsa* it is what is needed to move it from a contemplative experience to action by behaviour, which must include action oriented towards situations indicated by the vision of the way the world is going. After all, what shapes our ecological concern is precisely that kind of vision.

Clearly, there is a limit to which we can draw tangible guidance from ancient sources to initiate this kind of movement. But they furnish the general conditions that are helpful in our own efforts to initiate such movement, under circumstances of today that had no parallel in the times when our seminal religious and philosophical notions were formed. And yet, we are not entirely on our own.

And now, between today and ancient times another important difference must be noted. That is, while there was vivid awareness of the harm (*himsa*) done to animals and to plant life (especially in Jainism), and a sense of horror of it, there would have been no reason to be concerned, as we today are, with the evil of pollution of water, air, and soil. For the latter, however, we can draw insights pertaining to the manner in which ancient thinkers dealt with the question as to the meaning of there being a world, there being an earth, which define our existence. Such a question can never be put away. On the other hand, the manner, or manners, in which it is resolved, must be consolidated with the way we deal with our ecological concerns.

Notes and References

1. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* III: 6-8.
2. *Katha Upanisad* I.3.2; *Munkala Upanisad* II. 2-4.
3. *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad*, III, 8, 9.
4. Specially see Sankara's Commentary on *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad* III. 8, 9-12.
5. Commentary of *Brahmasutra*, II.1.6.14: *sarvajnyasya isvarasya mayasaktih prakrtiriti*.
6. Sankara's Commentary on *Brahmasutra* II.1.6.14: *Tattvanyatvabhya-Manirvacantye*.
7. M. Hiriyanna, *Outlines of Indian Philosophy* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1965), p. 167.
8. *RgVeda* X.90.
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Tackling Apartheid: Reflections on the 1971 Anti-Tour Campaign

Wendy Varney

THE YEAR 2001 marks the thirtieth anniversary of the 1971 South African Springbok Rugby tour of Australia and the nonviolent campaign against it.¹ The issues raised by the tour divided the nation bitterly, with demonstrators filling the football grounds and the goals and rugby supporters sometimes attacking, verbally and physically, the protestors who stood between them and their football.

Although the campaign was only one of a number of campaigns around the world against tours by South African sporting teams, the Australian campaign contributed to the broader struggle against apartheid and, perhaps unexpectedly, made an important contribution along the road (still continuing) to Australians recognising their moral obligations both at home and abroad, most especially with regard to the ongoing struggle for justice for indigenous Australians.

There can be no doubt that the struggle against apartheid was overwhelmingly won by the efforts of activists in South Africa.² Most of the pain and sacrifice was borne by the black population there and has given considerable heart to other struggles against repressive regimes. Nevertheless, anti-apartheid activists in South Africa called for international solidarity for their cause and identified specific areas where actions and support were urgently needed. Included was a call for a ban on South African sporting teams, a ban which was ultimately achieved worldwide, providing moral support for the struggle and a clear sign to the South African regime that its policies were internationally unacceptable.³ Most white South Africans had been shocked and dismayed when their country was excluded from the 1964 Olympic Games in Tokyo due to their apartheid policies in sports and this suggested to anti-apartheid activists that their exclusion from sports was a fruitful scheme whereby white South Africans

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could be pressured to reconsider their political system based on segregation.⁴ The 1971 Springbok tour was especially important because, firstly, Rugby was, by far, white South Africa's most popular sport, though played by few other countries and, secondly, the tour to Australia was a long one and eagerly anticipated by South Africa, lasting six weeks and involving matches in all but one of the six states of Australia, plus the Australian Capital Territory.

This article recalls the campaign against the Springbok tour, its tactics, methods and its short- and long-term achievements. With thirty years' hindsight, it will tease out the strengths of the campaign and the problems faced and look for general lessons which might be considered by nonviolent activists. In particular, it will demonstrate the part played by conversion, coercion, accommodation, and disintegration, four mechanisms identified by Gene Sharp as part of the formula for civilian-based defence, which is closely linked to nonviolent action more generally.⁵

Briefly, conversion seeks to alter the outcome by altering the convictions of opponents. It happens in the minds and hearts of opponents and was a strong current in Gandhi's hope for nonviolent change. Coercion is where the hand of the opponent is forced, albeit nonviolently, so that the outcome is in line with the activists' objectives.⁶ This article will show the strength of the coercive tactics in the anti-tour campaign while acknowledging, too, the important part played by conversion.

While conversion is about the heart and coercion about forcing the hand, accommodation can be seen as giving opponents a chance to save face. It refers to the process whereby opponents recognise that the balance of forces is shifting against them and seek to negotiate rather than face defeat. Disintegration occurs when an opponent's position is no longer tenable as the pressures from civil resistance throw both the authority and power structure of that opponent into disarray.⁷ I will briefly return to a discussion of these processes following a recount of the anti-tour campaign.

Resisting "Racist Rugby"

In 1970-71 there were numerous tours to Australia by the South African sporting teams. This was in line with prevailing attitudes characterised either by ignorance about the situation in South Africa or by empathy with white South Africans. Overseeing a relatively small population of largely British origins in a region of the world where populations were large, culturally different, and according to paranoid propaganda, ever menacing, Australian policymakers had long been obsessed with keeping Australia "white" and had enshrined that objective into immigration and other policies.⁸ This had some parallels with the situation in South Africa where an allegedly superior but minority white population was seen to be trying to maintain its lifestyle and keep the "anti-white hordes" at bay.⁹ Nonetheless there was a gradually growing awareness in the Australian

population about both domestic and international issues of justice which challenged, however slightly, this seemingly prevalent view, adhered to at least by a succession of federal governments if not the majority which voted for them. Certainly there was sufficient concern about the repression in South Africa and Australia's complicity with it for a challenge against both to be mounted symbolically and perhaps even practically, though that was still to be put to the test.

Accordingly, anti-apartheid activists sought a number of nonviolent measures by which black South Africans could be supported in their struggle against apartheid. Many of the measures had an economic focus but were difficult to promote and get support for. Sporting ties with South Africa were seen as an important linchpin in the morale of the racist regime. While economic boycotts could be circumvented and their impacts difficult to monitor, many of the impacts of a breach in sporting ties would be instantly observable and most certainly hurtful to the regime in South Africa, a country which had an obsession with sports and most particularly rugby.¹⁰

For this reason, the rugby tour by the Springboks was targeted as crucial.¹¹ Australian activists knew that stopping this tour would have much more impact than stopping a tour by any other South African team. But they knew too that a successful campaign against the tour, even if it could not stop the rugby matches, might ensure that this would be the last such tour to Australia. A tour by South African cricketers was planned to take place shortly after the completion of the Springboks' tour. As white South Africans were passionate about cricket, activists were hoping that whatever else evolved from the rugby tour, the cancellation of the cricket tour would be one outcome.

Under apartheid laws, black South Africans and other classified as "non-whites" were forbidden to represent South Africa or to play alongside white sports people. The unfairness of this was heavily publicised as the rationale for not playing sport with South Africa but the reasons actually went beyond this. Sport had been identified as an important cultural area through which the South African regime could be isolated and its unjust laws given publicity that might gain support for economic and diplomatic boycotts.¹² It was also an area where white South Africa would hurt badly while harm to the non-white population would be minimal. Activists knew that the black population was already suffering severely under the burden of apartheid. But most importantly, black activist South Africans themselves had called for sporting boycotts among other measures.

By the time the Springboks arrived in Australia, there had already been considerable preparatory groundwork for the nonviolent campaign and there had been demonstrations and other nonviolent actions taken against other South African sporting teams. The previous summer demonstrators had thrown black dye into the swimming pool at trials preceding a tour by Australian swimmers of South Africa.¹³ As well as demonstrations against

South African tennis players at Sydney and Melbourne's respective major tennis venues, White City and Kooyong, with the tennis net being pulled down at Kooyong and several subsequent arrests, there were much larger demonstrations at Lome and Coogee surfing beaches which included attempts to disrupt the march-past of a visiting South African lifesaving team.¹⁴ Sutherland Shire Council, a local government in Sydney, had refused that team use of Cronulla Beach.¹⁵ Humorously drawing on claims of a heavily advertised washing powder to make clothes whiter, leaflets and placards made for protests against the surfing tour proclaimed "South African Surf brings out the team all white."

Prior to the Springbok tour there were also public meetings, widespread discussion of tactics and scrutiny of what had worked in the anti-tour campaign when the Springboks had toured Britain in 1969.¹⁶ Nevertheless, Australian activists faced a number of challenges over and above those experienced by British anti-apartheid campaigners. These extra problems included:

- ★ A smaller population meant a smaller pool of activists for actions which relied heavily on mass resistance.
- ★ A much larger country geographically made it difficult for protestors to travel beyond their own regions to protest, as British demonstrators had been able to do.
- ★ The federal government, as well as Several state governments, were substantially more sympathetic to the tour than the government in Britain had been. Indeed, as well as making repeated supportive statements for the tour, the Australian Prime Minister, Bill McMahon, offered the services of the air force to ensure that the Springboks would be able to fly between cities despite threats of union bans.¹⁷ His government also rushed through approval for an eight-foot high barbed wire fence to keep demonstrators off Manuka Oval, the playing field where the Springboks would play in Canberra.¹⁸ For its part, the Queensland State government declared a state of emergency to allow extraordinary measures to support the tour and to suppress resistance.¹⁹
- ★ An attitude of sports being "like religion" in Australia made the task of gathering resistance to the tour formidable. Some people who might not mind being inconvenienced in other parts of their lives still considered sport to be sacred and were hostile to the mixing of politics and sport which, initially at least, was seen to be the doing of the demonstrators.

Nevertheless, the Australian campaign also had some strengths. Foremost among these were:

- ★ A tradition of unions becoming involved in social issues, certainly

not as often as activists might wish but at least on some notable occasions and in circumstances where their involvement, had often been vindicated. A refusal by waterside workers to handle pig-iron for export to Japan in 1938-39, fearing that the metal would be used in weapons against Australians, was one such example.²⁰ More recently, when the Gurindji people had gone on strike in 1966 over appalling work conditions and in demand of land claims, unions collected money and sent supplies of food and other goods, as well as being involved in demonstrations and public meetings in support of the Gurindji.²¹ In regard to South Africa specifically, in 1963 the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU), the peak association of unions in Australia, had adopted a policy against racial discrimination, with the ACTU Congress noting that "the people and workers in South Africa are living and suffering under a police state regime."²²

- ★ The opportunity to observe what had happened when the Springboks had toured Britain and to learn lessons from the British campaign.
- ★ An already radicalised student population which, through resistance to Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War and the issue of conscription which affected their age group, was willing to get involved in both foreign and domestic political issues and had some experience in doing so.

There were some other favourable factors. For instance, although governments were generally supportive of the tour, and often enthusiastically and belligerently so, the South Australian government was an exception. That state government, renowned for being more progressive than its counterparts, placed its own ban on the Springboks, disallowing them from using rail transport or other rail services in South Australia.²³ It did, however, provide police protection and assistance for the Springboks at their rugby match played in Adelaide and for other activities connected with the tour.

An analysis of the forms which resistance to the tour took demonstrates that many bases were covered and that principles of nonviolence were largely adhered to. Similarly, they encompassed both conversion and coercion, though different groups had a different focus. For instance, there were various attempts, falling within the category of coercion, to stop the rugby tour from going ahead, or at least to disrupt it to the extent that it would become a farce.

Towards this latter end, unions imposed bans as recommended by the ACTU which, after being lobbied by anti-apartheid groups, decided the cause was one worth supporting. Union bans included a ban on servicing aircraft carrying the Springboks and a ban on the supply of liquor to hotels accommodating the South African team.²⁴ Unions justified their stand by

claiming that capitalists were able to choose exactly how they invested their money and that workers surely had the right to choose how they invested their labour and to withdraw it from unethical or distasteful activities such as the tour.

Although not all bans were observed, they were sufficient to create much havoc with the tour and alternative arrangements had to be made particularly with respect to transport and accommodation of the Springboks. The team had to be transported around Australia in small privately chartered and much slower aircraft as union bans disallowed the Springboks from travelling on Australia's commercial airlines. Some unions initiated further actions. For instance, Melbourne waterside workers went on strike for the entirety of the Springbok's presence in that city.²⁵ In Brisbane there were union actions against both the tour and the State of Emergency. The latter included building workers stopping production of softwood batons for use by Queensland police, unionists fearing that these would add to police violence against anti-apartheid demonstrators.²⁶ A number of unions published anti-apartheid leaflets, such as "Why the Boks are Black" ("Black" referring to the "Black Bans" imposed on the Springboks), put out in Melbourne by the Amalgamated Engineering Union and explaining the reasons for unions' blackbans against the touring team.²⁷ Among the union bans was one by postal workers stopping mail from being delivered to the Springboks.²⁸

The other main direct action taken in relation to the tour was the mass attendance at Springbok matches for the purposes of disrupting and, if possible, stopping play. People brought whistles to make a din to break the players' concentration, thereby diminishing the skilled play of the Springboks (who were reputed to be the best rugby players in the world) and the spectators' enjoyment of racist rugby. The strident whistling made the referee's whistle difficult to distinguish from those of the demonstrators. Other tactics to disrupt play included the throwing of flares and smoke bombs onto the field and, in some cases, running onto the field, though this was difficult to achieve due to the huge police presence and the obstacle of barbed wire at venues such as the Sydney Cricket Ground (SCG).²⁹ Nevertheless some demonstrators were able to find ways around this. At the match between a Sydney team and the Springboks, five activists disguised themselves as rugby supporters and sat in the SCG Members Stand, which was not separated from the field with barbed wire, as was the rest of the ground. When a suitable opportunity arose, they sprinted onto the field, one of the activists even being able to get possession of the ball and dribble it for some distance, bringing great applause from fellow protestors. They were arrested, of course.³⁰

Other inside-the-ground tactics such as carrying placards and chanting were intended to affect the concentration of the players as well as highlighting the politics behind the Springbok tour. Even these simple tactics involved planning and fall-back positions as police at some venues

were searching protesters and confiscating whistles, clickers, and other protest materials so that anti-apartheid activists had to sneak these in. Some women hid their whistles and other protest paraphernalia in their bras. Raising arms and shouting "Sieg Heil" not only created noisy disruption and drew attention to the nature of the South African regime, whose Prime Minister had fought for the Nazis during the Second World War,³¹ but it also helped conceal those demonstrators who were throwing harmless objects onto the field as play came in the vicinity. When numerous arms were raised in unison, it was difficult for the police to establish who had thrown fruit or flares (items thrown were for disruptive purposes, not to the players).

In Queensland the police presence at one Brisbane match and the vehement response by the Premier (head of the state government) to the demonstrators was such that it was decided to have a march through the streets of Brisbane—which had been left with a skeleton police force—instead of demonstrating at the sporting venue. Flexibility proved important as the dynamics of the issues and state suppression unfolded. This was particularly the case in Queensland where the issues of apartheid became enmeshed with a broader campaign for civil liberties, especially following declaration of the State of Emergency by the Premier Jo Bjelke-Petersen. That nonviolent actions often addressed both issues simultaneously was evident in 2000 posters hastily designed, printed, and pasted up in Brisbane's inner city. These posters, along with 10,000 matching leaflets handed out in the city, exclaimed "Good on you Jo. Now the Boks will feel at home."³² Similarly, while demonstrators over the rest of Australia chanted "Go home, Racists!" Queensland protestors taunted the Springboks with "Welcome home, Racists!"³³

Actions taken within the sports grounds were mostly of a pragmatic nature but also played a role in maximising media attention both within and outside Australia. In this much they used coercion but looked to convert onlookers and recipients of media reports. Activists knew that their actions would get much more and much wider publicity if there was an aspect of confronting apartheid in a fairly direct, though nonviolent, manner. They took heart from reports of black Africans huddled around transistor radios in townships in South Africa, listening to the disruption of Springbok matches.

Another objective of actions inside the ground was to take some control of the tour agenda. South African Prime Minister Vorster had told the Springboks before they left for Australia that they represented not only South African rugby but also South Africa's way of life.³⁴ The demonstrators were keen to emphasise and show up this political aspect of the Springbok tour.

Some demonstrators did not attend the matches, preferring not to contribute towards the profitability of racist tours, but protested at the gates instead. By distributing leaflets to spectators entering the grounds,

they hoped to explain the case against hosting sporting teams from South Africa but they also featured in national media. So their impact went beyond personal contact. Their main methods were based on conversion and, given the massive decline in support for the tour, it is fair to assume that these protestors played an important role. Some people, instead of protesting in person, wrote letters such as one from an articulate correspondent published in *The Australian* newspaper. He claimed that the Springboks knew they were selected on a racial basis but chose to take advantage of that system to selection rather than oppose it. It was, after all, easier to be a "football hero" than a "martyr," he pointed out, adding that he would not boo or throw fruit but would simply stay away from a match he would have thoroughly enjoyed but for its connections with racism.³⁵

While the protestors inside clearly did more to turn the matches into a farce, there were advantages in having protestors outside the grounds concentrating on conversion. One benefit was that these demonstrators were very clearly nonviolent and, while that was true for the great majority of demonstrators inside the ground as well, demonstrators inside the ground were part of events which could more easily be painted or interpreted as violent. Certainly, it was more difficult for the media and for rugby spectators to simply dismiss demonstrators outside the ground as larrikins looking for a confrontation. Especially effective in terms of peaceful resistance were the Black Sash Women, inspired by the Black Sash Movement in South Africa, where groups of women wearing black sashes would stand silently in protest against apartheid. They were an effective and well-known symbol of resistance in their own country and, in solidarity with them and their cause, more than 100 women, including seven Aboriginal women, similarly protested silently and with black sashes in Adelaide.³⁶ Black sash vigils also took place in other cities. A *Sydney Morning Herald* picture of a group of Black Sash protesters with heads bowed provided a powerful front-page portrayal of the peaceful nature of their protests.³⁷

Among the leaflets distributed was one produced by a group of Australian rugby players who had chosen to make themselves unavailable for selection in the team to play the Springboks.³⁸ The leaflet succinctly and effectively argued the case against playing sport with South Africa, pointing out that it would be in contradiction of the spirit of sport. This went some significant way to countering the argument that politics should be kept out of sport. The presence of this group and their leaflet and media appearances were among the most powerful tools in the campaign to stop the tours. Rugby players who had the chance to represent their country at something they loved doing were clearly making a very visible sacrifice in making themselves unavailable. They were, therefore, along with the church representatives, a most credible group of people and must have held considerable sway with those who initially knew little about apartheid.

Graffiti was also highly visible. Even before the Springboks arrived in Sydney, protesters painted slogans on the wall surrounding the SCG. "If

this is not nice, neither is apartheid" and "Would Jesus have played with apartheid?" Similarly, the Melbourne Cricket Ground was dubbed with "Smash Apartheid" and "No Rugby or Cricket Tours by Racists."³⁹

Actions were not confined to inside and outside the rugby venues but included demonstrations outside the Springbok's motels, at airports as the Springboks arrived and departed at their destinations, at training sessions, and at receptions. In Western Australia demonstrators followed the Springboks in a car as the team was given a tour of Perth. When the Springboks' bus pulled up at traffic lights, the protestors tried to give them anti-apartheid leaflets through the bus windows.⁴⁰ The perpetual presence of protesters was a constant reminder of dissent against apartheid and the tour. There was also a protest at a North Sydney Council meeting which was adjourned early so that the mayor and several other councillors could attend a reception for the Springboks.⁴¹ "Flying Teams" of volunteers on motor bikes followed the Springboks as they moved between their sometimes clandestine destinations, protesting and alerting other demonstrators of the team's whereabouts. These tactics supplemented more traditional forms of protest such as letter-writing and public meetings to try to bring the issues to the attention of the broader community. Despite heavy security at all Springbok venues, members of a Jewish sports association, Kadimah, put several hundred anti-apartheid stickers throughout one motel where the Springboks were staying.⁴² Demonstrators outside motels did not limit their actions to opposing apartheid. Some tried to construct an anti-racist presence and a celebration of diversity. Two prominent opponents of apartheid, Sekai Holland, a black woman from what was then Rhodesia and her white Australian husband, Jim Holland, booked into the motel where the Springboks were staying in Sydney. They wanted to make the point to the Springboks that outside of South Africa both whites and blacks could be guests at the same hotel and that theirs was an inter-racial marriage (such marriages were banned in South Africa at the time). Even more importantly, they wanted to make that same point of contrast to people in Australia who knew little of the situation in South Africa. The Hollands would appear from their balcony at the motel to wild cheers from demonstrators. Aboriginal activists also confronted the Springboks wearing Springbok guernseys (football jumpers). This was a strong anti-apartheid symbol as in South Africa only whites were allowed to wear these guernseys.

Another example of celebrating racial diversity was an ecumenical religious service held in a carpark outside the motel on the night before the Springboks' last test match in Sydney. The service was not simply an appeal to God but signalled strenuous objection to Australia's sporting collaboration with South Africa and demonstrated solidarity with the anti-apartheid movement there. At the same time, it was meant to disrupt the Springboks' sleep and undermine the psyche of the team. The instigator of the service, a Catholic priest, Roger Pryke, asked people to bring musical

instruments—the more the better. Accordingly, it was an extremely noisy service and the singing of hymns and protest songs—more noteworthy for volume than for maintaining key—and the cleaning of makeshift instruments, including garbage bin lids, prolonged the service into the late hours of the night, even after the “official” service was complete.⁴³

A staunch advocate of nonviolence, Pryke, had started in his parish a nonviolent action group, called the Dorothy Day Group after the famous American nonviolent activist of that name. Pryke was only one of a number of clergy involved in the “Stop the Tour” campaign. The convenor of the anti-tour movement in Adelaide, for instance, was Rev. Roderick Jepson. Numerous other priests and ministers also attended rugby matches to protest the Springboks’ presence in Australia and the Central Methodist Church sponsored a public meeting to facilitate discussion and protest. Indeed, a wide cross-section of the community was represented by the campaign, although its image was one of being dominated by students. Certainly students played a prominent and well-organised role, especially in terms of their noisy presence at Springbok matches and at airports as the Springboks arrived at and departed from various capital cities. Nevertheless the movement was embraced by a wide variety of people.

The campaign against the Springboks tour was buoyed by union action, although it was not only unions but also some individual enterprises that observed boycotts and bans. Among these was a restaurant in the vicinity of the Springboks’ Sydney motel. A sign in its window, in contempt of apartheid, announced that it would happily serve black persons but “. . . Springboks, no thank you.”⁴⁴ A cricket correspondent for the *Canberra Times* who loved cricket and loved reporting on the sport announced that he would refuse to report on any cricket matches played by a visiting South African team if the cricket tour went ahead.⁴⁵ Such stances against apartheid cannot be overestimated. They displayed great courage and inspired it in others.

Some very imaginative tactics were put to use or at least planned as part of the protests. These included a huge model of a black South African, made from hessian bags, being hung on a long rope from the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The plan was that Sydney would wake one morning in the midst of the Springbok tour to find the 30-foot long dummy hanging from the bridge as a grim reminder of the tough life faced by black South Africans, but the Sydney Water Police were alerted to the dummy and cut it free from the bridge before dawn. Nevertheless, the plot received newspaper and other media publicity. An explanatory anti-apartheid statement issued by the group who made and hung the dummy was broadcast over radio.

One scheme which did not eventuate was to sneak a greased piglet into the SCG and release it onto the playing field where it would be extremely difficult to catch. As it turned out, it was hard to catch even an ungreased

state. When it ran away from an anti-apartheid campaigner's home and could not be caught, the plan disappeared with the pig.⁴⁶

Another plot was conceived by union officials from the NSW Builders Labourers Federation who stole into the Sydney Cricket Ground on the evening before one of the tests and attempted to saw down the goal posts. Their efforts failed when they were prematurely discovered.⁴⁷

Foiled and successful actions alike proved precursors to what could be expected in the case of the cricket tour proceeding. To effectively protest cricket matches, police would have to be on the field and intermingling with—and therefore interfering with—fielders. Demonstrators would be absconding with the ball each time it was hit over the fence.⁴⁸ Activists also warned that they would sneak small mirrors into the ground, that could be used to reflect light into the eyes of batters, blinding them to each ball faced. Certainly the cricket tour would face significantly more difficulties from the tour organisers' point of view than the rugby tour. Therefore the cancellation of the cricket tour in September 1971, while not a foregone conclusion by any means, made practical sense and was unquestionably the fruit of nonviolent actions, both demonstrated and promised.

Success from the Seeming Failure

Although the six-week rugby tour was completed, there were a number of successes from the anti-tour campaign:

- ★ Firstly, the actions and boycotts were indeed disruptive. In the cities of Canberra and Orange, the Springboks had to be privately billeted because of bans, protests, and the difficulties they caused tour organisers trying to procure accommodation. In Adelaide alternative hotel accommodation had to be hastily organised after the arranged hotel cancelled the team's booking.⁴⁹
- ★ Largely as a result of publicity from the disruption and the union bans, the campaign against the tour raised the level of consciousness and concern about apartheid. Whereas when the tour started, only 7 per cent of Australians opposed sporting ties with South Africa, according to public opinion polls, this figure had increased to one in three by the end of the Springbok tour, a phenomenal turnaround which would be the envy of many nonviolent campaigns.⁵⁰ Moreover, that figure was quickly growing so that, when a new federal government came to office in 1972 with a policy of refusing visas to racially selected sporting teams, the public generally seemed supportive of such a policy.
- ★ The campaign was effective in stopping the tour by a South African cricket team from going ahead. There were no more tours to Australia by South African sporting teams until apartheid ended. Indeed governments took on the arguments of protestors and in

1977 Commonwealth countries signed the Gleneagles Agreement against sporting contacts with South Africa.

- ★ Importantly, as well as forcing the cancellation of the cricket tour, the activists were successful in prompting statements from both the Australian and South African cricket organising bodies which were critical of the racial nature of touring South African teams. A statement from the Australian Cricket Board of Control acknowledged "widespread disapproval of South African government's racial policy which restricted selection of South African teams."⁵¹ Donald Bradman, chairman of the board, told the press following the cancellation of the tour: "Our board is not interested in politics in sport. We cannot deny that the South African government is" and he went on to offer "utmost support" to the South African Cricket Association in its attempts to bring about policy changes in South Africa. Don Bradman had remarkable status in Australia, not just as an excricketer whose batting exploits were without parallel but as a quasi-statesman.⁵² Seen to be the epitome of good sense, sound judgement, and a sense of fairness, even a mild criticism of apartheid coming from "the Don" (as he was known in Australia) may well have legitimised resistance to apartheid in many minds and to have prompted the general public to think more critically about the issue. In response to the board's statement, South African cricketing officials, who tended to be substantially less supportive of apartheid than their rugby counterparts, sympathised with the difficult decision that the Australian Cricket Board of Control had made and lamented that the government's policies kept races apart in sport. The chairperson of the South African Cricket Association and Ali Bacher, who would have captained the team to Australia, called the government's sports policy "illogical and unacceptable." Bacher said: "My conscience compels me to speak out for multi-racial sport and to urge other South African sportsmen to do the same." He said that the system of selecting teams on a racial basis was "wrong . . . We should have spoken out against this a long time ago."⁵³ Such statements from both the sporting bodies helped to raise the international profile of criticism of apartheid and to vindicate the Australian campaigners.

- ★ There is no doubt that the very public demonstrations against apartheid which formed a crucial core of the campaign boosted the morale of anti-apartheid campaigners in South Africa, as did the outcomes in the form of the cancellation of the cricket tour and the statements issued by respective cricket boards. It was reported that, while while South Africans watched the scores, black south Africans were more interested in the numbers of demonstrators.⁵⁴

- ★ The campaign helped to further isolate the South African regime and gave strength to calls for other cultural and economic boycotts. For instance, by the 1980s the strength of the movement was such that anti-apartheid campaigners were able to chase Pick “n” Pay, South Africa’s largest supermarket chain, out of Australia.⁵⁵ There were also concerted and ultimately successful campaigns against South African Airways.

Thus, while the campaign’s stated aim—to stop the rugby tour—failed, it contributed to eventually putting an end to apartheid. But there were also domestic repercussions. In Queensland the campaign helped to bring issues of civil liberties to a head, though these took some considerable time, effort, and implementation of nonviolent actions to resolve.⁵⁶ Another flow-on was for indigenous Australians. Their lot had long been one of dispossession and economic and cultural degradation, a situation still far from overcome. However, the consciousness raising that resulted from resistance to the Springbok tour fed into the long struggle for justice for Aboriginal people. Ironically many supporters of the tour used as their rationale that Aboriginal Australians suffered many of the same oppressions as South Africans. African population and Australians were, therefore, not in a position to “throw stones.” The paradox was that often this argument was put by those who had been the least willing to recognise the level of injustice inflicted on Australia’s indigenous population. Wherever this argument came from, it gained considerable currency among those who supported the rugby tour. As for the demonstrators, these included Aboriginal people who identified themselves with their oppressed counterparts in South Africa as well as non-indigenous demonstrators whose consciousness and activism in the struggle for Aboriginal justice ranged from little awareness to a deep involvement.

Following the Springbok tour, more of these activists became involved in actions such as marches for Aboriginal Land Rights and the establishment of the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.⁵⁷ As these actions gave prominence to previously under-publicised issues, they forever changed the ideological terrain and elevated matters of racial justice to unprecedented levels in the public consciousness. While there is still a great deal more to be achieved, as evidenced by the Australian Prime Minister’s refusal to apologise for generations of Aboriginal children being “stolen” from their families, there can be no retreat to the days prior to the 1970s when issues of racial justice were virtually “non-issues.”

Factors and Lessons

In my description of resistance to the Springbok tour, efforts to convert and coerce are found straightforward and obvious. Attempted disruptions to the rugby matches, for instance, fall into the category of coercion, in that they were attempts to influence the matches, the depiction of the tour and

the likelihood of future tours. Coercion worked because events at the Springbok matches led the Australian Cricket Board of Control to seriously doubt its ability to host a cricket tour under conditions where a massive police force would have to staff the field for matches that each lasted up to five full days.

Strategies such as the effigy hung from the Sydney Harbour Bridge, on the other hand, were intended to throw light on the situation in South Africa and to provide symbolic representation of Australia's complicity by hanging the model from a well-known Australian icon. That particular action sought to change public opinion by juxtaposing symbols of the Australian way of life, held dear by many Australians, with the values implicit in Australia's hosting a sporting tour of this nature. In the final analysis, both coercion and conversion worked well over the course of the campaign.

Accommodation and disintegration were partial in evidence but are more difficult to separate from conversion and coercion at times. The Australian Cricket Board of Control, for instance, seems to have accommodated the viewpoint of the resisters, thereby allowing its decision to be seen in a moral light, even though it had had ample opportunity to cancel the tour previously—or simply not to have organised it in the first place. Had the board members been convinced of the righteousness of the activists' cause? Or did they pragmatically accept that, if, in practical terms, it was impossible for the cricket to go ahead, then there was more kudos to be had in making an anti-apartheid statement as part of the cancellation, than to simply admit defeat at the hands of anti-apartheid activists? That would certainly fall within the "accommodation" category. Either way, this was a victory for the activists as they had either convinced the Board members that they should not play sport with South Africa or they had changed the ideological climate to such a degree that there was acclaim for those who chose not to play sport with South Africa.

It seems that the ideological climate did change and that several governments, by closely aligning themselves with the tour, suffered some level of disintegration in terms of their own credibility. Some governments, and particularly the Queensland Government, saw the tour as an opportunity to score political points around the issue of law and order but, in choosing a stance which was pro-Springbok and effectively pro-apartheid, these governments put their own credibility on the line. As support for the tour waned, so too did their moral authority disintegrate.

This was especially the case as those governments taking a vehemently pro-Springbok stance usually backed this up with force. The federal government's willingness to involve the air force can be interpreted as a strong resolve to support the tour and to interpret its continuation as being in the "national interest." There were various instances of police brutality, with many police indulging their sense of power and lust for violence. Perhaps they felt that they were not so much maintaining order as giving

weight to the state's political investment in the tour. Accordingly, journalists and TV camera workers who were reporting on the tour were on occasions hindered, assaulted, or arrested.⁵⁸ At an incident in Brisbane one young woman was hit from behind by the police while being interviewed by a reporter from the Australian Broadcasting Commission. The Council for Civil Liberties received over fifty complaints about police behaviour following the Springboks' match in Melbourne where excessive force by police prompted calls for a Royal Commission.⁵⁹ The very terms on which the police were instructed to take part—as part of a State of Emergency in Queensland, for instance—made their involvement far from neutral. Moreover, there were numerous episodes of police ignoring—and even enjoying—assault on protesters by rugby supporters who seemed to also understand that the state was there not to maintain the peace but to ensure that the game went ahead and that the demonstrators suffered for their troubles. One incident, a vicious assault on a demonstrator by a well-known local publican at the Springboks' match in Toowoomba while police stood by, received national publicity but still did not result in charges being laid on the perpetrator.⁶⁰

Demonstrators, on the other hand, were often arrested merely for being there and on trumped up charges. Some charges seemed to suggest that protest was a crime in itself. For instance, one demonstrator at the match in Orange was arrested on a charge of offensive behaviour after he had sung out "Go home, Racists!"⁶¹ The Canberra Council for Civil Liberties expressed concern at the arbitrariness of some arrests, fearing that the intention of police had been to arrest those whom they considered "with or without pretext" to be "ringleaders."⁶² The number of protesters arrested over the course of the tour—over 700—was clearly excessive and demonstrated state support for the tour. Long-time peace activist Philip Berrigan, among other advocates of nonviolent action, has stated that activists should be prepared to go to gaol, that gaol is a "consequence of resistance."⁶³ The sheer numbers of those who were willing to do so, in this case, served the purpose of alerting people to the conviction of the activists but also of raising concern about the heavy-handed approach of the State when dealing with such dissent. This must surely have contributed to "political jiu jitsu," a term used by Gene Sharp to describe a situation where nonviolent actions caused "the violence of the opponent's repression to be exposed in the worst possible light," bringing about a "shift in public opinion."⁶⁴ As public opinion shifts in matters of social justice, governments who fought against the changing attitudes and against social improvements are shown to be out of touch and reactionary so that areas of the State's credibility can be seen to disintegrate. Not surprisingly, no future government in Australia, state or federal, ever again tried to gain political mileage by promoting the so-called right to play sport with South African sporting teams.

The issue of polarisation is also relevant here. Michael Randle has suggested that polarisation works against conversion and certainly that

would seem to be the case generally.⁶⁵ Nevertheless, in the case of the Springbok tour, despite clear polarisation for and against the tour, the dynamics were constantly shifting and conversion took place even in the face of strong polarisation. As mentioned, public opinion turned around dramatically, perhaps because there was political jiu-jitsu at work and perhaps because there was successful public education, fuelled by the media's delight in the confrontation, though it is often difficult to get mass media to address key issues, much more so to get them to address them adequately. The campaign appears to have allowed people to learn more about apartheid and how it was implicated in a rugby tour. It is more difficult to know how much they learned about apartheid or whether they came to side increasingly with the demonstrators because of their apparent courage and their role as "Davids" against the Goliath of the state.

There is a cultural tendency—though not guaranteed and not uninfluenced by media representations—for many Australians to side with underdogs. The black population in South Africa and demonstrators who took up their cause may have come to fill this role in the public image, thereby inviting people to reconsider their support for the tour, even when their opinions on this matter had seemed firm and ardently held. For some, the tour came to be opposed solely on the grounds of the divisions which it was creating in Australian society. In other words, the very polarisation itself came to be reason enough to oppose the tour.

But the tour also provided the chance for apartheid, with all its violence and extremeness, to be tasted and symbolically represented in Australia. Suddenly playing fields provided rich potential for a multitude of metaphors. Sport had become war, football fields had become battlefields. Resisters were having their heads kicked as if they were protestors in South Africa. It was explosively confrontational and highlighted that Australia was (under normal circumstances) not South Africa. As observers came to be thankful for that, they perhaps came around to thinking that giving moral support to the South African regime, even via a series of seemingly innocuous football matches, was not a good idea. Thus in this case polarisation does not seem to have stood in the way of widespread conversion.

If there are any major lessons that emerge from the success of the campaign, they would be:

- ★ Action should be appropriate
- ★ Activists should be imaginative
- ★ Nonviolence should be visible
- ★ There is no substitute for preparation.

Appropriate Action: Actions should be appropriate for the problem faced. The target must be well-chosen and the action taken should be such that it supports the goal. The Springboks, as representatives of apartheid,

were a clear and present target which provided opportunities for the issues to be discussed. The time frame was one within which resisters could maximise their efforts prior to and over the duration of the tour and then later fall back to a more manageable input of activism to avoid burnout. Disruption of matches was a clear, practical, and viable goal, which fitted in with larger goals in the anti-apartheid campaign. Actions should also be culturally appropriate. Zunes, Kurtz, and Asher point out that different nationalities and people can have strong cultural identifiers which can be relevant for and useful to nonviolent resistance.⁶⁶ Anti-tour activities and statements seem to have appealed appropriately to Australians' sense of fairness, which is integral to their perception of how sport should be played.

Imagination: The campaign displayed imagination and novel ideas, which have also been important in other nonviolent campaigns of resistance around the world. Where oppressors think "repression," nonviolent resisters need to think "expression" and "inspiration." One of the ideas suggested for the cricket tour, which did not have to be used, was to send remote-controlled model aeroplanes onto the cricket pitch. During the Springbok tour of New Zealand in 1981, protesters bettered this idea with a real Cessna which dropped flour and leaflets onto rugby players below.⁶⁷ The best way of harnessing imaginative ideas is to be grassroots-based and to leave small groups to organise their own nonviolent activities, which is how the Australian anti-tour campaign operated.

Make Nonviolence Visible: One problem faced by anti-tour activists was not simply that some among them did not adhere to principles of nonviolence but it was at times difficult to extricate their own actions from the images of violence which were not of their doing but mainly instigated and performed by police and rugby supporters. This means that nonviolent activists have to pay great attention to not just acting nonviolently but also to being repeatedly seen and heard to be opposed to violence. The Protestors' Guidebook, put out for the anti-tour protests, stated clearly and in block letters that all actions should be nonviolent and should seek to do no physical harm to the tourists, spectators, or any other sector involved.⁶⁸ Demonstrators were encouraged by anti-tour organisers to link arms when they were on the field or elsewhere where they might come under physical attack.⁶⁹ Such tactics were useful as, when protestors have their arms linked, it is much easier to see that they are not throwing punches or wielding weapons than if their arms were flailing about, even in self-defence. Linking arms and ensuring that the impression as well as the actuality is nonviolent can therefore maximise political jiu-jitsu, whereby the violence of the oppressor and the nonviolent response from resisters wins sympathy for a cause by the high moral stance taken by those resisters.

Preparation: Lastly, the issue of preparation is crucial. While much of the resistance to the Springbok tour had a somewhat spontaneous flavour—

largely because demonstrators always had to have an element of surprise lest police foil their plans—this in no way detracts from the considerable preparation that went into the campaign which had been building ever since it was announced that there would be a Springbok tour. Pivotal in the building of the campaign was a visit to Australia in 1969 by anti-apartheid activist and poet Dennis Brutus, who had been imprisoned in South Africa, had had his works banned there and was exiled in 1966. He was a powerful advocate against sporting links and his arguments and his appeals were heeded by those who went on to lobby against sporting ties.⁷⁰ Anti-apartheid campaigners lobbied church groups and unionists, both of whom came on board the campaign, and held public meetings to try to raise the issue. Anti-apartheid activists in Brisbane held a series of vigils in the city centre prior to the tour. There were many hours of preparation spent in letter-writing, discussion of tactics, definition of what was permissible and what was not in terms of nonviolence (for instance, it was generally accepted that fruit, marine flares and smoke bombs could be thrown onto the playing field, but that broken glass, explosives and anything else which may cause injury should not be used. That is not to say that all demonstrators abided by the general agreement).

As the tour drew near, a booklet giving guidelines on how to disrupt the tour, pitfalls, novel suggestions, how to avoid arrest, and what to do in case of arrest was published and sold very well. There were also demonstrators' kits assembled which included the booklet, along with black balloons, whistles, and clickers. Prior meetings discussed and came up with the idea of affinity groups for demonstrators inside the grounds. It was thought they would be most effective and most protected if they were in groups of up to 10, allowing them to be watchful of each other and a strong enough force to discourage assault by rugby supporters.

There was also considerable preparation involved in bringing out two overseas anti-apartheid activists, Bishop Edward Crowther who had been expelled from South Africa for his opposition to apartheid and Peter Hain, an anti-apartheid leader who had played a strong role in the campaign against the Springbok tour of Britain. These opponents of apartheid, along with domestic opponents such as Sekai Holland, were widely promoted by the campaign to the media, in attempts to highlight the issues. Hain's airfares were paid for by the anti-apartheid movement in Britain, demonstrating an international commitment to opposing apartheid.⁷¹ Other financial assistance came from industrial and students' unions, along with a number of individuals, including a number of university academics who donated a day's pay towards the campaign.

Even with the best preparation, there is no guarantee of success, so it is important to take a broad overview, as campaigns that do not succeed in their immediate goals may still have beneficial flow-ons and worthwhile areas of other successes. The successes of the anti-tour campaign were part of a chain. The very raising of the issues and the gaining of sympathy for

the cause ensured the likelihood of success at the next step. Disruption led to publicity, publicity undermined the attraction of South African sporting teams and such distaste for these teams, and uncertainty about the practicalities of hosting them led to cancellation of the cricket tour, which prompted anti-apartheid statements from cricketing authorities. These in turn gave credibility to calls for further boycotts, which were partially effective and which gave morale boosts to those in South Africa who, we must remember, were conducting the major struggle and who achieved their own victory.

As noted before, Australian anti-tour activists faced several specific problems. In the final analysis, it must be said that the campaign compensated for those problems by good organisation, forward preparation, confidence in grassroots actions, and a willingness to try innovative schemes as part of the resistance to the rugby tour. This serves as a reminder that seemingly insurmountable problems can be overcome or at least outweighed by enthusiasm, commitment, planning, widespread grassroots involvement, and careful attention to matching appropriate methods with desired outcomes. These were all evident in the anti-Springbok campaign.

Conclusion

The anti-tour campaign in Australia was a broad-based movement with strong democratic traits. As pointed out, the campaign against the Springbok tour firstly raised the issue of apartheid and showed the political aspects of playing sport with South Africa, so that many people who had initially supported the Springbok tour came to change their minds. The campaign led directly to the cancellation of the impending tour by South African cricketers, with positive statements forthcoming from both the respective cricketing organisations in both Australia and South Africa.

Both the cancellation and the statements were important for reasons of successive sporting boycotts in other countries and also gave strength to economic and other cultural boycotts against apartheid in Australia. The successful severance of sporting ties with South Africa lifted the morale of anti-apartheid activists in South Africa and was especially important in terms of the handful of rugby-playing nations. Since few countries play rugby, each one which decided against playing with the Springboks was an important nail in the coffin of apartheid. As it turned out, there was a political bonus for the campaign in Australia, in that it raised issues of justice in respect of indigenous Australians.

No campaign can be expected to unfold exactly as the anti-tour campaign did; for, each issue and each campaign that confronts it brings its own dynamics and must be analysed for its own internal opportunities and the circumstances within which a campaign has to be built.⁷² Nevertheless there is much to be gained by examining and attempting to understand as clearly as possible what were the key features in success or in failure. It is expected that there will be differences from country to country, though

obviously many similarities as well. The same is true of time. What worked well in 1971 may not be exactly what is needed for a campaign in 2001. These are all matters which organisers of nonviolent social change will need to consider and address. But as they do so, there is one important factor emerging from these campaigns worth remembering. That is that at the very start of 1971 anti-tour organisers, while determined to launch as big an opposition to the tour as they could, felt that their efforts would only be token. They considered it would be virtually impossible to stop the Springbok tour and most unlikely that they could stop the cricket tour unless they could convince the Australian Cricket Board of Control to take a moral stand. What eventuated met many of their goals but went beyond most of their expectations.

Campaigners against racist tours can be proud of their part in the overall struggle and of the fact that these methods employed by them were largely nonviolent.

Notes and References

1. Rugby is a heavy physical-contact code of football in which the ball is mostly thrown and sometimes kicked as players run towards each other's try-line in order to score points. Goals are also kicked through opponents' goal-posts. There are 15 players per side on a rectangular field. Some players, forwards, are chosen largely for their strength, weight, and ability to obtain possession of the ball via scrums and to make progress towards the try-line by pushing forward through the middle of the field, as well as ability to create opportunities for their backs. Backs are chosen largely for their speed and other running and ball skills, such as side-stepping, change of pace and the ability to create gaps in the opposition's defence and to pass the ball to the right person at the right time. Although played also by women, it is a code of football that has strong links with masculinity and often national identity, as strongly evident in the case of South Africa.
2. Stephen Zunes, "The Role of Nonviolent Action in the Collapse of Apartheid," *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 20, No. 4, January-March 1999, pp. 389-420.
3. New Zealand was one of the last countries to have sporting contacts with South Africa and hosted a tour by the Springboks in 1981, which instigated widespread upheaval. See Geoff Chapple, 1981: *The Tour* (Wellington: A.H. & A.W. Reed, 1984); Malcolm Templeton, *Human Rights and Sporting Contacts: New Zealand Attitudes to Race Relations in South Africa 1921-94* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998); and Trevor Richards, *Dancing on Our Bones: New Zealand, South Africa, Rugby and Racism* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 1999).
4. Joan Brickhill, *Race Against Race: South Africa's "Multi-Racial" Sport Fraud* (London: International Defence and Aid Fund, 1976), p. 11.

5. See Gene Sharp, *Civilian-Based Defense: A Post-Military Weapons System* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990).
6. Coercion can also be violent or underpinned by violence, of course, but this works on a different premise from nonviolent coercion.
7. This was first identified by Ralph Summy and has since been added to Gene Sharp's original three mechanisms.
8. Humphrey McQueen, *A New Britannia: An Argument Concerning the Social Origins of Australian Radicalism and Nationalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), pp. 68-69.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
10. David R. Black and John Naughtright explore the enmeshed cultures and politics of rugby in their *South Africa in Rugby and the South African Nation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998).
11. For a discussion of the ongoing anti-apartheid campaign in Australia over a longer period, see Penny O'Donnell and Lynette Simons, eds, *Australians Against Racism: Testimonies from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Australia* (Sydney: Pluto, 1995).
12. M. Taylor, *I'm Against the Tour* (Devonport: CARE (NZ), 1970); Martin Bailey et. al., *The Case for Sanctions Against South Africa* (New York: United Nations, 1982); Peter Calvocoressi, *South Africa and World Opinion*, issued under the auspices of the Institute of Race Relations (London: Oxford University Press, 1961). For a deeper understanding of the integration of sport and politics in South Africa, see Grant Jarvie, *Class, Race, and Sport in South Africa's Political Economy* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1985). For a discussion of how South Africa tried to respond to sports bans and give the appearance of change, see Colin Tatz, *Sport in South Africa: The Myth of Integration* (Melbourne: Australian Council of Churches, 1983).
13. Meredith Burgmann, "Foul Play," in Penny O'Donnell and Lynette Simons, eds, *Australians Against Racism: Testimonies from the Anti-Apartheid Movement in Australia*, p. 14.
14. Denis Freney, *A Map of Days: Life on the Left* (Port Melbourne: Heinemann, 1991), pp. 286-90; Mark Steer, *The Whole World Watched* (Brisbane: Anti-apartheid activists, circa 1971), p. 3.
15. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971* (Melbourne: Gold Star, 1972), p. 97.
16. The impacts of the Springbok tour to Britain added to ongoing political-sport controversies, mainly in relation to cricket tours. The 1968 cricket tour to South Africa was cancelled after Basil D'Oliveira had been selected for the English team and South African Prime Minister Vorster demanded his exclusion, a demand English cricket authorities refused to meet. D'Oliveira himself was a talented black South African who had been excluded from South African teams on the basis of his colour, thereby precipitating his decision to move to England and make himself available for selection there. There was ongoing debate about cricketing ties following the cancellation of the 1968 tour and in May 1971 just prior to the Springboks' tour of Australia, English cricketing authorities decided

- to play no further tests with South Africa ("Move on South Africa," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 July 1971, p. 12).
17. Paul Webster, "McMahon Offers a VIP Jet for Tour," *The Australian*, 26 June 1971, p. 1.
18. "Barbed Wire Ordered to Guard Springboks," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 16 July 1971, p. 1.
19. The Federal Government was implicated in this State of Emergency as it allowed the police brought from all over Queensland to be billeted at army barracks.
20. J.R. Robertson, "1930-1939" in Frank Crowley, ed., *A New History of Australia* (Melbourne: William Heinemann, 1974), p. 455.
21. Hannah Middleton, *But Now We Want the Land Back* (Sydney: New Age Publishers, 1977), p. 111.
22. Cited Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 219.
23. Kenneth Randall, "Ban Flying Springboks," *The Australian*, 23 June, 1971, p. 1.
24. *Ibid.*, "Springbok Tour in Balance as Vital Talks Held," *The Australian*, 24 June, 1971, p. 1.
25. Mark Steer, *The Whole World Watched*, p. 4.
26. *Ibid.*, pp. 18-19.
27. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 220.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 233.
29. The SCG was used exclusively in Sydney after the Rugby League was forced to let the Rugby have this venue instead of the Sydney Sportsground, where there was no barbed wire and demonstrators had promised to swarm onto the field in droves.
30. Lenore Nicklin, "Day of the Demo—but Rugby was First," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1971, p. 3.
31. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 67.
32. Mark Steer, *The Whole World Watched*, p.15.
33. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 129.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 227.
35. Letters to the Editor from P. Gerber of St. Lucia, Queensland, *The Australian*, 24 June, 1971, p. 8.
36. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 73.
37. Photograph accompanying "8 Arrested at Tourists' Motel," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1971, p. 1.
38. In July 2001 a special dinner was held to honour these players: Tony Abrahams, Jim Boyce, Paul Darveniza, Terry Forman, Bany MacDonald and Bruce Taafe. However, even as late as 1993, Rugby officials were still

- claiming that the demonstrations had flopped and that maintaining sporting ties with South Africa had been a reasonable strategy for dismantling apartheid. See D. Tucker, "22 Years On," *Australian Rugby News* (Sydney), July 1993, pp. 10-13.
39. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971*, p. 63.
40. "Touring Team Faces Tiring 8-Hour Flight," *The Australian*, 28 June 1971, p. 1.
41. "30 Protest at Council Meeting," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 July 1971, p. 3.
42. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971*, p. 49.
43. Noise followed the Springboks wherever they went. It had been particularly noisy all night outside their hotel in Adelaide (Tim Dare, "Springboks Again Denied Their Sleep," *The Australian*, 30 June 1971, p. 1). This led to the South Australian state government being accused of bias in not enforcing order, though certainly that claim could have been made of other state governments which gave protection of the Springboks from disruption heavy priority over other pulls on police resources.
44. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971*, p. 93.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 238.
46. Denis Freney, *A Map of Days*, pp. 298-301.
47. Jack Munday, *Green Bans and Beyond* (Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 1981), p. 72.
48. The problem would not have been solved simply by having a ready supply to balls. An important part of cricket is that the ball is supposed to gradually change under prevailing pitch and play circumstances and, except where the ball sustains unusual or debilitating damage, it is not meant to be changed until it has been used for at least 90 overs, that is bowled 540 times.
49. "How Rugby Turned into a War Game," *The Australian*, 27 June 1971, p. 11.
50. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971*, p. 244.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 239.
52. Brett Hutchins, "The Uses of Nostalgia: Don Bradman and Australian Cricket," *Social Alternatives*, Vol. 19, No. 2, April 2000, pp. 35-39.
53. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia, 1971*, pp. 242-43.
54. Mark Steer, *The Whole World Watched*, p.1.
55. Anon, "Opening Moves," *The Economist* (US), 18 December 1993, Vol. 329, Issue 7842, pp. 19-21.
56. For a discussion of the longer-term campaign, see Ralph Summy, "Ordinary Mortals of Nonviolence," *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 22, No. 3, October-December 2000, pp. 279-99.

57. Gary Foley, "Whiteness and Blackness in the Koori Struggle for Self-Determination: Strategic Considerations in the Struggle for Social Justice for Indigenous People," *Just Policy*, Nos. 19-20, September 2000, pp. 74-88.
58. Mark Steer, *The Whole World Watched*; Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, pp. 74-77.
59. "Police Brutality Claim at Rugby Riot," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1971, p. 1; "Premier Makes Sabotage Charge," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 July 1971, p. 3; Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 84.
60. "Rugby Fan Smashes Demonstrator's Nose," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 August 1971, p. 3; Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, pp. 15-27. This was not an isolated incident. The Council for Civil Liberties received numerous reports of assaults by rugby fans on demonstrators.
61. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 107.
62. Canberra Council for Civil Liberties, *The Springbok Match in Canberra: A Report by the Council for Civil Liberties* (Canberra: Canberra CCL, 1971), p. 9.
63. Philip Berrigan, *National Catholic Reporter*, Vol. 30, No. 15, 11 February 1994, p. 17.
64. Gene Sharp, *The Politics of Nonviolent Action* (Boston: Porter Sargeant, 1973), p. 657. See also Brian Martin, Wendy Varney, and Adrian Vickers, "Political Jiu-Jitsu Against Indonesian Repression: Studying Lower Profile Nonviolent Resistance," *Pacifica Review*, Vol. 13, 2001.
65. Michael Randle, *Civil Resistance* (London: Fontana, 1994), pp. 110-15.
66. Stephen Zunes and Lester R. Kurtz, "Conclusion" in Stephen Zunes, Lester R. Kurtz and Sarah Beth Asher, eds, *Nonviolent Social Movements: A Geographical Perspective* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 306.
67. Geoff Chapple, "The Rugby Connection: New Zealand-South Africa Sporting Links," *Social Alternatives*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1985, p. 23.
68. *Springbok Tour 1971: Protesters' Guidebook* (Sydney: Sydney University: Anti-Apartheid Movements, 1971), p. 4.
69. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971, p. 125.
70. Personal communication with Peter McGregor, Convenor of the anti-apartheid movement in Sydney during the 1971 tour.
71. Stewart Harris, *Political Football: The Springbok Tour of Australia*, 1971.
72. Kurt Schoch, "People's Power and Political Opportunities: Social Movement Mobilization and Outcomes in the Philippines and Burma," *Social Problems*, Vol. 46, No. 3, August 1999, p. 355.

Gandhi, Religious Pluralism, and the Foundation of Indian Nationhood

Saral Jhingran

SWARAJ FOR MAHATMA Gandhi was self-rule which did not necessarily mean only the expulsion of the British from India, at least in the early stages of the development of his thought, but rule over oneself, conceived in terms of continence, truth, nonviolence, and resistance.

Secondly, *Swaraj* meant for Gandhi remaining true to our own national culture which, according to him, is based on religion and morality.¹ It also meant total rejection of the use of machines and whatever else modern Western civilization stands for. And the latter included not only railways and industrialization but also the medical profession and even school education.²

Some of these are controversial issues, and I would not address myself to them in this paper. I am rather concerned here with a third aspect of Gandhi's conception of *Swaraj*; and I believe that it is the most important or relevant part of the Mahatma's message for contemporary India.

I refer here to his strong conviction that various religious and ethnic and regional communities together form the Indian nation. He firmly believed in, and insisted upon, the basic or fundamental unity of India which included and yet surpassed all diversities and even conflicts. He upheld this view in contradistinction to the English speaking elite's view that Indians were a divided people, and that the sense of nationhood developed in them only as a result of the railways linking the country and the spread of English language.³

He described how the seers and leaders of ancient India perceived the Indian sub-continent as one nation. "They learned one another's language, and there was no aloofness between them." The coming of Muslims made

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no difference to India's nationhood.⁴ To quote his memorable words: "India cannot cease to be one nation because people belonging to different religions live in it. The introduction of foreigners does not necessarily destroy the nation, they merge in it."⁵

And

If the Hindus believe that India should be peopled only by Hindus, they are living in a dreamland. The Hindus, Mohammadens, the Parsees and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow countrymen, and they will have to live in unity, if only for their own interest. In no part of the world are one nationality and one religion synonymous terms; nor has it ever been so in India.⁶

It is as if Gandhi anticipated the two-nation theory in 1908 and offered a final rebuttal of it. If only Indians, including perhaps even Gandhi, had insisted that "one nationality and one religion are not synonymous terms," then perhaps there would have been no partition of the country. He constantly reminded Indians that even if they follow different religions, they share common ancestors, and "the same blood runs through their veins." He asked them how people belonging to the same nation, same race, can become mutual enemies simply because some of them have changed their religion. Above all, we should remember that men worship the same God through different religious forms. He added:

Religions are different roads converging on the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal? Wherein is the cause for quarrelling?⁷

Gandhi was fond of comparing the nation to a family, and religious groups to brothers in the family. He repeatedly referred to our "Musalman brothers" to whom the Hindus owed the duty of consideration and love even as an elder brother is expected to be forbearing and tolerant towards his younger brother. The simile of Indian nation being like a large joint family consisting of several brothers and their families, who fight among themselves occasionally, but are always conscious of the familial or blood bonds that unite them, provided the perfect framework for Gandhi's moral teachings.

He taught nonviolence and forbearance as the guiding principles of inter-community relationships. He understood and explained communal violence as a matter of family quarrels. Family disputes are never settled through recourse to violence, but rather by an appeal to the good sense and goodwill of the other party to the dispute. Our "brothers" may not agree to our point of view or our emotional demands, but such disagreement can provide no excuse or occasion for an aggressive or violent behaviour towards our brothers. He was strictly against any kind of force, whether physical or legal, or that of sheer number.

Take, for example, the issue of cow slaughter which he said was close to his own heart. But he opposed all legislation banning cow slaughter. He contended that Muslims have every right to slaughter the cow as a religious sacrifice, as Hindus have a right to worship idols in Muslim majority states.⁸ Neither violence nor legal coercion would be justified where the beliefs and practices of the followers of other religions were concerned.⁹ Both, the followers of a given religious practice—whatever the practice—and those others who are opposed to that practice must be restrained and forbearing in their approach. While the people who object to a certain religious practice are prohibited from any aggressive behaviour towards the community whose practice they are objecting to, the followers of the other religion whose practice hurts the feelings of the first community are expected to practise self-restraint and avoid undertaking that practice.

Any insignificant religious practice may become an irritant in inter-community relationships. But any form of violent or aggressive behaviour to coerce the other community to compliance with our wishes is a taboo in Mahatma's thinking, even as such behaviour would be censored in the context of family relationships.

India is a nation, and a nation is a brotherhood of humanity within a demarcated geographical region. A brotherhood means equality and solidarity; and for the Mahatma it also means forbearance, nonviolence, and self-restraint. And this is what his *Swaraj* is all about.

IF ANY PHRASE or slogan embodies the basic spirit or *Weltanschauung* of Indian culture, then it is "unity in diversity." It may sound as a cliché but it is still true. The greatness of Gandhi lies in his realization that it was the truth about India. The Mahatma believed in the basic unity or affinity of all religions. But he affirmed it in such a manner so as not to undermine the separate identities of various religions. His greatness further lies in reconciling the two principles of unity and diversity of religions in such a way so as to achieve optimum possible harmony between them:

The need of the moment is not one religion, but mutual respect and tolerance of the devotees of the different religions. We want to reach not the dead level, but unity in diversity. Any attempt to root out traditions, effects of heredity, climate and other surroundings is not only bound to fail but is a sacrilege. The soul of religion is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. The latter will persist to the end of time. . . .¹⁰

His faith in the unity of religions did not undermine the plurality and uniquenesses of various religions. Having affirmed that "the soul of religion is one," he further asserted that "it is encased in a multitude of forms." And "the latter will persist till the end of time." The very idea of religious toleration implies plurality or diversity of religious traditions. Religious identity, or the feeling of belonging to some particular religious community,

was accepted by Gandhi as natural. But having accepted the plurality of religions and religious communities, he went on to underline how they are united in one nationhood. He constantly pleaded for the need of sincere Hindu-Muslim unity and the freedom of India. He would choose the former rather than the latter. To quote his own words:

Swaraj for India must be an impossible dream without an indissoluble union between the Hindus and Muslims of India. It must be a partnership between equals, each respecting the religion of the other.¹¹

The idea of partnership implies different or separate groups or communities. All through his life he tried to strike a balance between his recognition of the separate identities of different religious groups, and his intuitive faith both in the fundamental unity of India, and the urgent need to maintain and strengthen the same unity. He believed:

There will be no unity unless each party is prepared to understand, appreciate, and make allowances for the other's viewpoint and even weaknesses. This requires a large heart, otherwise called charity.¹²

The Mahatma taught a unique conception of religious toleration which starts by acknowledging the plurality of world-views and religions, and asks us to adopt an attitude of positive understanding and respect for those other religions. According to him,

Toleration is not a coinciding of views. There should be toleration of one another's views, though they may be as poles asunder.¹³

What is equally important is that Gandhi's conception of toleration is a very positive one which, if adopted by contemporary Indians, would lead to an ideal state of communal harmony and national integration. To quote his own words,

I do not like the word "tolerance," but could not think of a better one. Tolerance may imply a gratuitous assumption of the inferiority of other faiths to one's own, whereas *ahimsa* teaches us to entertain the same respect for the religious faiths of others as we accord to our own, thus admitting the imperfection of the latter.¹⁴

While Semitic religions in general, and post-modern Western thought in particular, have emphasized the uniqueness and separateness of different religious traditions, the Indian mind has always hankered for unity. From the Vedic seers, who declared that the Truth is one though sages call it by many names, to modern Indian saints and philosophers, such as Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Gandhi, and Radhakrishnan, they have all affirmed the basic unity of all religions. The assertion of unity at the experiential or mystical level, as was made by Ramakrishna, or at the theoretical or philosophical level, as was made by Vivekananda and

S. Radhakrishnan, may be controverted by others. But it does not create any practical problems, nor does it solve any practical problems. At the practical level of socio-political life, however, we are confronted, first, by the immense diversity in the beliefs, practices, and values of various religions, and, secondly, by the separate claims of various religions to be in exclusive possession of supreme truth, and to be the sole vehicle of human salvation. The two assertions of uniqueness and plurality of religions, and the claim to superiority or finality on the part of each religion, are related. As a result, the various religions and religious communities do not only exist, they are often in conflict with each other.

The Mahatma accepted the plurality and uniquenesses of different religions; he also had an intuitive faith in the unity of religions. But he rejected the separate claims of different religions to be in exclusive possession of the final revelation of God. Different religions and religious communities are there, they must be acknowledged, and given due respect, but they cannot claim to be the exclusive vehicle of God's revelation or the sole means of human salvation. It is this claim of immense superiority over all other religions, and not just the plurality of religions, which is the cause of all inter-religious conflicts. And the Mahatma rejected this claim:

If we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. We have not realized religion in its perfection, even as we have not realized God.

Religion of our conception, being thus imperfect, is always subject to a process of evolution and reinterpretation. . . . All faiths constitute a revelation of truth, but all are imperfect, and liable to error. . . .

The one Religion is beyond all speech. Imperfect men put it into such language as they can command, and their words are interpreted by other men who are equally imperfect. Whose interpretation is to be held to be true?¹⁵

On another occasion he contended:

After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that (i) all religions are true; (ii) all religions have some error in them; (iii) all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism. . . .

Our prayer for others must be *not* "God, give him the light that Thou hast given me." but give him all the light and truth he needs for his highest development."¹⁶

LET US NOW take three sons of India who have tried to face and tackle the problem of religious plurality and their interrelationships—Kabir, Gandhi, and Nehru.

Kabir was the first saint of India who confronted the challenge of religious pluralism. His answer to the challenge was an outright rejection of the diversity of religions. As he understood it, the diversity consisted in the peripheral matters, institutions, and rituals of different religious

traditions. One could realize God by transcending the institutional religion and seeking Him in his heart. Kabir's God tells the seeker "O servant, where dost thou seek Me? Lo: I am besides thee."¹⁷

And,

Hari in the East, Allah in the West—so you like to dream. Search in the heart and heart alone, there live Rama and Karim.

Kabir does not merely say that God resides in all hearts but also that "all men and women born, are but all your forms."¹⁸

Kabir rejected all distinctions of religion and caste. All human beings are essentially the same; and the man-made distinctions of caste and creed are false:

"Numskull: you have missed the point.

It is all one skin and bone . . . One blood and one meat . . .

Who is a Brahmin, who is a Shudra?

Kabir says, plunge into Rama, There is no Hindu, no Turk."¹⁹

Thus God's immanence in all hearts, and the absolute equality of all human beings are the two sides of the same model for Kabir. All beings are unconditionally equal because, "all beings are born of one Glory (*Nur*): so that it is impossible to distinguish between them and declare as to who is bad, and who is good." Kabir is here not making any dogmatic assertion regarding the unity of religions, as was done by many other nineteenth- and early twentieth-century Indians. He is rejecting all bases of distinction between man and man; between religion and religion. And he is asking the seeker to transcend all these distinctions, because only then can one realize the "divine" within oneself.

I happen to agree with Kabir fully. On the other hand, Kabir's rejection of plurality, diversity, and uniqueness of different religions would not be acceptable either to the protagonists or to the followers of different religions. Also, any such spiritualistic talk may not provide any guidance for regulating human relationships within a pluralistic society as India's.

Then there was Nehru. He was not a man of religion, though he was attracted towards spiritual matters. Like Kabir, he rejected the distinction between man and man on the basis of their religious affiliations. But his reasons for rejecting these distinctions are wholly secular, as against the spiritual ones of Kabir. For, Nehru was an archetypal humanist, for whom all human beings are equal *qua* their humanity. He criticized the communal organizations which were more interested in claiming privileges and special protection for their respective groups than in matters of national interest. He dreamt of an India in which elimination of abject poverty, misery, and ignorance would be of prime importance and religious differences could have no relevance. He rightly pointed out that religious content was minimal in all so-called communal conflicts. He valued religious and

cultural toleration like a true Indian, and acknowledged that these "were inherent in Indian life."²⁰

While Kabir rejected all distinctions between Hindus and Turks, Brahmins and Shudras because of his faith in the essential affinity, or likeness, of all human beings, both at the spiritual and the physical plane. Nehru rejected them because the division of the Indian populace into Hindus, Muslims etc. seemed totally irrelevant to him in tackling the socio-political issues he was really interested in.

The Mahatma, on the other hand, gave full recognition to religious communities and their separate identities and interests. Perhaps the Mahatma was a more practical man than either Kabir or Nehru, both of whom were visionaries in their different ways. Perhaps, recognition of ground realities of India's socio-political life was a prerequisite of any attempt at providing some effective solutions to the problems of a plural and highly volatile populace. Perhaps the communal identities are primordial and have to be accepted as such.

Gandhi emphasized religious identities because he recognized religion as the supreme guiding principle of human life at both personal and social levels. If so, religion becomes the most important factor in a person's or group's life; and it is but natural that it is expected to determine the identity of individuals and groups.

I do not agree with the Mahatma here, because I believe that individual persons have multiple identities and belong to various groups simultaneously, so that no single identity can be determinative of an individual's personhood. But I will leave out my personal views here.

Nevertheless there is an inner tension in Gandhi's thought. On the one hand, he regularly emphasized his identity as a Hindu, and distinguished the Hindus from their Mohammedan brothers. On the other hand, he strongly believed in the basic unity of all religions.²¹ This unity, in turn, implies a prior distinction between the essence and peripheral matters of a religion. While the essence or core of religions is one, the core is embodied in several historical forms.²²

If the spirit, soul, or essence of different religions is one, then the separate identities of different religious groups could only be due to peripheral matters. At least, it could not have any material relevance for a truly religious person, like a Kabir, or a Gandhi.

But the Mahatma did not like to dwell on esoteric subjects. The emphasis in Gandhi is generally less on the unity of religions, and more on the brotherhood of all religious communities within the nation, less on any spiritual doctrine of God's immanence in all hearts, more on nonviolence, self-restraint, and forbearance. In the present circumstances, *Swaraj* or self-rule, both in the personal and national contexts, could best be achieved through mutual tolerance, forbearance, and nonviolence, as compared to any esoteric philosophy of the unity of all religions.

In this context both Gandhi's understanding and evaluation of the religious plurality and the way suggested by him for harmonious existence of various religious communities within the nation-state are more realistic, practical, and desirable than the alternative approach of Kabir and Nehru, which rejects the relevance of religious diversity in order to assert the unity of humankind. Diversity is there and it cannot be wished away. The tensions arising from this diversity in a pluralistic society, such as India's, can be resolved in two ways. One is the way of religious toleration adopted by modern Semitic religions and Western societies in general. The other is the way of Mahatma Gandhi according to which the term "toleration" implies the superiority of one's religion and culture, whereas we should adopt a positive attitude comprising of sincere respect for other faiths and acknowledgment that one's own faith is neither perfect nor final. The mutual respect among different faiths implies a recognition of both the imperfections of one's own faith and the good points of others.²³ It paves the way for mutual dialogue, give and take, as also a habit of mutual accommodation and forbearance, all of which are very different from mere toleration of other religious faiths. Our country, ridden by inter-community tensions and conflicts does not need the naughty attitude of religious toleration, as advocated by the secularists, but Gandhi's conception and practice of *sarva dharma samabhava* (equal respect for all religions). This, however, need not mean the state's encouragement of different religions in the name of secularism, as is being practised nowadays. It also need not mean giving religions a determining say in the lives of the individuals and society. It rather means a respect for the followers of other religions as persons whose beliefs and practices are of as much value and meaning for them, as ours are for us. Any such approach gives a solid foundation to harmonious relationship between different religious groups, and bridging the gulf between them which is created by each religion claiming finality and superiority for its own credal beliefs and practices. The Mahatma's way consists in accepting the facts as they are, and then showing a way to transcend the limitations of factual situations to a world of peace, harmony, and love.

Notes and References

1. See M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1909), pp. 54-55.
2. *Ibid.*, Chs. IX-XII, XVIII.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-44.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

7. *Ibid.*, p. 45.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 46-49.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
10. *Young India*, 25 September 1924.
11. *Young India*, 6 October 1920.
12. *Young India*, 12 June 1924.
13. *Ibid.*
14. *Sabarmati*, 1928, as given in M.V. Desai, *Gandhi Reader for 1988*, pp. 34.
15. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 35.
17. *Poems of Kabir*, tr. by Tagore, 1972, p. 21.
18. *The Bijak of Kabir*, tr. by Linda Hess and Sukhdev Singh, 1986, p. 74.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 67.
20. See Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India*, 1989, pp. 382 ff., 392 ff. etc.
21. "Is the God of Mohammedans different from the God of Hindus? Religions are different roads converging to the same point." See M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, p. 45.
 "There is only one God for us, whether we find Him through the *Quran* or the *Gita*. And He is a God of Truth and Love," "Appeal to the Citizens of Bombay" *Gandhi Reader*, p. 20.
22. "The soul of religion is one, but it is encased in a multitude of forms. . . ." *Young India*, 25 September 1924.
23. "If we are imperfect ourselves, religion as conceived by us must also be imperfect. . . . If all faiths outlined by men are imperfect, the question of comparative merit does not arise. *Gandhi Reader*, p. 34, also p. 35.

Gandhi's Campaign Against Untouchability 1933-1934

(AN ACCOUNT FROM THE RAJ'S SECRET OFFICIAL REPORTS)

Edited and with an Introductory Essay by

Baren Ray

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Baren Ray has been an old political activist from his student days in the early 1940s. He has been to prison both before and shortly after Independence for his political work. He was active in the Indian and international Peace and Solidarity movements for many years since the inception of these movements. He represented India at the Permanent Secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (headquartered in Cairo) twice. Since 1981, he has been devoting himself entirely to research and has been a Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research for 1988-90 and 1992-93.

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UN and the Challenge of Global Terrorism

THE TERRORIST ATTACKS on the United States on 11 September 2001 by two hijacked planes crashing New York's 110-storey World Trade Center and another hijacked aircraft wrecking parts of the Pentagon and blasts at the State Department have shaken the world community. These attacks have been the biggest and most concerted terrorist attack in history. They have been described as an assault not just on the United States or the West, but on the very concept of civilization itself and have provided a vindication of the "clash of civilizations" thesis propounded by Samuel Huntington in 1993. This has necessitated a careful look at the phenomenon of international terrorism and how it is being handled, particularly by the United Nations.

Definition of Terrorism

There is, first of all, a need for an honest and globally acceptable definition of the term "terrorism." The word "terrorism" has emerged from the Latin verbs *terrere* and *deterre* which means an act to make others tremble and frighten them, respectively. It implies a strategy to achieve avowed objectives via the systematic use of violence, thereby undermining the lawful authority of a government or a state.

Terrorism does not have a universally accepted definition. According to Walter Lacquer, there are 109 definitions of terrorism. It is viewed as the use or threat of violence, a method of *combat or a strategy*, not an ideology, to achieve certain goals. It is ruthless and does not conform to humanitarian norms and publicity is an essential factor in terrorist strategy.

The causes of terrorism are diverse and often they overlap. Terrorism is an end result of ideological, national, and religious fundamentalism. Whether the motivation of terrorists is political, ideological, or

psychopathic, the rapid spread of organized violence and terrorist attacks have posed a grave threat to world peace and endangered the foundations of modern civilization. The Western governments with their open and mobile societies have become increasingly vulnerable to terrorist attacks. The case of India is similar.

Genesis of International Terrorism

Terrorism has become a worldwide phenomenon. An essential precondition of international terrorism is international linkages between terrorist organisations and groups. These groups exchange equipments, involve themselves in combined operation planning, avail themselves of the benefits of each other's training areas, and they support each other. The terrorists, in fact, have no regard for the national boundaries. They belong to one country, achieve their training in some other country, and get their finances and operate in yet some other different countries. Technological advancements have introduced new kinds of weapons and explosives to be used in the field of terrorism.

Pattern of Global Terrorism

Terrorism has been prevalent throughout history, engulfing all regions of the globe. The use of terrorist techniques by factions against regimes is an age-old phenomenon. It can be traced to the Roman emperors who used such means to discourage any threat to their rule. However, the first prominent instance of a movement resorting to terrorism as a major weapon was the Assassin Sect of the Middle East which had sent out its agents throughout the Muslim world to carry out a chain of murders during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. Terror was openly sponsored during the French Revolution in order to instil a revolutionary fervour among the people. The philosophy of anarchism also supported terrorism as a means to bring about revolutionary political and social change (see Surendra Chopra, "Terrorism: The Apex of Violence—A Prolegomenon To Its Causes," *India Quarterly*, Vol. 47, No. 4, October-December 1991, pp. 83-94). From 1865 to 1905 the scene of global terrorism was restricted to the countries where prime officials were killed by the guns or bombs of the anarchists.

The twentieth century brought about revolutionary changes in the techniques and use of terrorism. Technological advancement gave the terrorists a new mobility and lethality. Today, terrorism has become a lethal weapon for initiating a process of destabilization.

The incidence of terrorism has steadily increased from the late 1950s and has involved kidnapping, bombings, assassinations, and the hijacking of airplanes and ships. Terrorist tactics have encompassed the wide spectrum of causes and governments. Terrorists targeted American officials, military personnel, and non-combatants around the globe. There is a vast and

growing literature on terrorism [some of the recent studies on terrorism are: Christopher C. Harmon, *Terrorism Today* (London: Frank Cass., 2000); Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998); and Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destructions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999)].

In modern times terrorism is harboured and used by what are referred to as "rogue states" to assault the status quo. In the modern context, rogue states show contempt for international norms by promoting international terrorism. States breeding terrorism during the Cold War invariably became synonymous with rogue states in the post-Cold War period. States sponsoring and engaging in terrorism allowed their territory to be used for training or as a haven for agents fleeing prosecution. Such states also cooperated with each other and aided terrorist cells.

In the post-Cold War era, there was the first official application of the term "rogue state" to unsavoury regimes. Former American President Bill Clinton had spoken about the clear and present danger from "rogue states" such as Iran and Libya which posed a threat for using missiles against Europe (*ibid.*). The leaders of these states rejected international norms, sponsored terrorism, pursued the acquisitions of mega death weapons, and threatened the international peace and security. They challenged "the new-found consensus that economics mattered more than military force in the new international order" (Thomas H. Henriksen, "The Rise and Decline of Rogue States," *Journal of International Affairs*, Vol. 54, No. 2, Spring 2001, p. 359).

The U.S. Department of State placed eight nations on an official terrorist list and imposed sanctions on each of them to combat their state-directed violence. Established as part of the Export Administration Act of 1979, the list currently includes Cuba, Iran, Iraq, Libya, North Korea, Syria, Sudan, and South Yemen. Sudan was the last country so designated in 1993. South Yemen, whose seaport was the scene of the bombing of the USS Cole, was removed from the list in 1990 after it unified with the northern Yemen Arab Republic.

Muammar Qaddafi underwrote vigorous terrorist exploits soon after he ousted the Libyan monarchy in 1969. Libya's deadly subversion reached such proportions that by the 1980s Qaddafi had been viewed by the Reagan administration as "the center of global terrorism."

After the Gulf war of 1991, the UN imposed sanctions on Iraq, dispatched weapons inspection teams, pressed for reparations for the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and authorized "no fly" zones both in the north and in the south. Iraq even plotted to assassinate former US President George Bush during a visit to Kuwait (*ibid.*, p. 365). The United States pursued its policy to increase Iraq's isolation. It rotated warships in the Gulf, stationed troops in Gulf regions, and retaliated with cruise missiles for the plot on former US President Bush's life. Later, after the four-day bombing operation called Desert Fox, in December 1998, Washington continued air strikes on Iraqi

anti-aircraft sites. Major cracks occurred in the anti-Saddam Hussein coalition. Reacting to Iraq's obstructions of international weapons inspections, the UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) concluded in mid-1998 that further efforts were to prove futile. The withdrawal of UNSCOM left Saddam Hussein free to develop weapons of mass destruction.

The renewal of Israeli-Palestinian fighting late in the year 2000 heightened anti-Americanism throughout the Muslim world. The UN imposed sanctions against Iraq, causing enormous sufferings to civilian population. There was a demand made by NGOs to ease UN sanctions as they denied food and medicines for ordinary Iraqi people. Despite sanctions and sufferings of the Iraqi people, Saddam Hussein has manouvered to remain in power.

Today, Afghanistan has become a breeding ground for global terrorism. The history of Afghanistan is a history of resistance. Throughout its history, land-locked Afghanistan has fought many wars. In the late twentieth century, Taliban Islamic fundamentalists took control of Afghanistan and controlled about 95 per cent of the country until a couple of weeks ago.

The Emergence of the Taliban

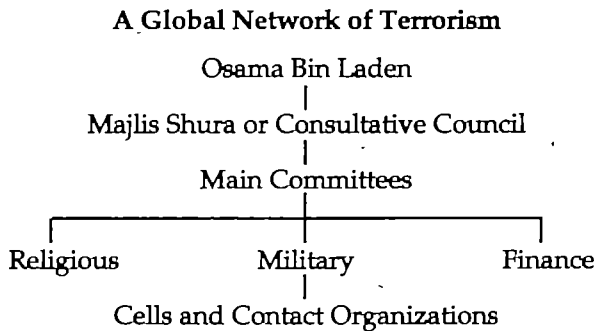
The 22 years of war in Afghanistan, which began with the Soviet invasion in 1979, is among the longest running conflicts in the world today. A civil war broke out in 1992 when the *mujahedeen*, a group of warlords that had helped to resist the Soviet invasion, overthrew the pro-Communist government. In 1994 the Taliban, a group of *madrassa* students mainly from refugee camps in Pakistan, organized a campaign to cleanse the country of the *mujahedeen*. The Taliban was isolated from the international community because of its draconian interpretation of Islamic law.

After the capture of Kabul, the Afghan capital, in 1996, the Taliban continued to sweep northwards but they were met with tough resistance from the United Front under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Masoud. In August 2000 the Taliban captured Taloqan, the political capital of the United Front.

Maulvi Nabi Mohammed Nabi is one of the key ideological founders of the Taliban. Mullah Mohammed Omar is now the leader of the Taliban. It must be noted that the Taliban do not constitute an exclusively Afghan movement. According to UN officials, non-Afghans make up approximately one-third of the Taliban fighting force. They include hundreds of Arab militants from over a dozen Middle Eastern and North African countries fighting under the banner of Osama Bin Laden; Central Asians fighting for the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU); Uighur militants from China; and Kashmiris, Bangladeshis, Iranians, and Chechens. Pakistan also encouraged thousands of students from largely anti-Shia's Pakistani *madrassas* to fight for the Taliban.

The Global Terrorism Network

Osama Bin Laden, the 44-year-old Saudi dissident, is the architect of global terrorism. He has a heavily fortified house in Kandhar, but prefers his Khorasan hideout in Central Afghanistan. It is defended by anti-aircraft guns. He controls his school of terror—Al Qaeda (the base) which experts believe is the hub of a global network of Sunni Islamic terrorist groups. He was expelled from Sudan in 1996 and it was the Jalalabad *Shura* (Council) ruling eastern Afghanistan at the time that welcomed Bin Laden.



Bin Laden has given a call to all Muslims to wage a *jihad* against the US and its allies. Al Qaeda has 500 volunteers drawn from a pool of 50,000 Afghan war veterans and radical Muslims: about 300 are based in Afghanistan and fight alongside the Taliban known as the 055 Brigade. The military committee controls the militants.

Cells are small for security reasons. Members of one are unknown to those of another, with one group planning an attack, and another executing it. There are Al Qaeda cells in 34 countries, including India—according to a recent Western intelligence report. Overseas cells are controlled by Muhammed Atef alias Abu Hafs who fought against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and is a committed and effective military commander.

Osama Bin Laden is reportedly worth \$300 million. He has pumped funds into recruiting and training Arab volunteers, especially during fights against Soviet troops in Afghanistan. He has interests in construction, currency exchange, and export businesses which fall under the umbrella group, Taba Investments.

Osama Bin Laden's main worldwide alliance includes: *Algeria's Armed Islamic Group* which engages in financial crimes; operates safe houses in Africa, Europe and America; *Egypt's Islamic Jihad*, which is probably largest component of the alliance but repressed at home; *Lebanon's Hezbollah* which is fighting Israeli forces; has close ties with hardline factions in Iran and is one of Al Qaeda's strongest units; *Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan* which hopes to instal a Muslim theocracy in Uzbekistan and fights alongside the Taliban; *Harkat-ul-Mujahideen* which is operating in Kashmir; and *Moro*

Islamic Liberation Front which seeks independence for Muslim majority in the southern end of Mindanao, the Philippines.

UN and the Taliban

The Taliban-sponsored Islamic militancy has been of grave concern for the United Nations. Initially, the Taliban's actions met with slow response from the international community. In November 1999, the UN Security Council imposed limited sanctions on the Taliban and demanded extradition of Osama Bin Laden who was wanted for the 1998 bombings of two US Embassies in East Africa that killed 225 people.

Throughout the year 2000 the UN threatened the imposition of even tougher sanctions as an attempt to coordinate anti-terrorism measures. In April 2000, the Shanghai Five—Russia, China, and the three Central Asian Republics—held a summit in Tajikistan where they strongly condemned the Taliban for supporting terrorism. They also set up an anti-terrorist centre in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. At present Pakistan is the only country that supports the Taliban and has accorded to it diplomatic recognition. Both the United States and China had put pressure on Pakistan to moderate its policy and to do more to end the war in Afghanistan. Additionally, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative to Afghanistan, Francesc Vendrell, had attempted to mediate in order to bring about an end to the Afghan conflict. But his efforts did not yield any results. The war in Afghanistan is still going on and the Northern Alliance are already in control of virtually the whole country.

The Afghan factions sustain their war effort through arms trafficking and massive smuggling of drugs, consumer goods, and fuel. The prevalence of this criminal activity has created a new class of "trader-truck mafia." Drugs, arms, and Islamic fundamentalism have become intimately inter linked. According to the UN Drug Control Programme (UNDCP), Afghanistan is the world's largest producer of opium. The sale of opium has created a vast transnational network for the Taliban. It involves drug dealers in Central Asia, Pakistan, Iran, the Gulf States, and, most recently, the Caucasus and Chechnya. These transnational links also provide the means, routes, and carriers for illicit arms transfers to radical Islamic movements across the region. The illegal income of the Taliban has enhanced the political role of drug smugglers, arms dealers, transporters, and truckers who all have a vested interest in seeing the war continue until a Taliban victory is achieved.

The sufferings of the Afghan people are indescribable. The drug and smuggling trade has virtually destroyed traditional agriculture and food production. Poppy has replaced wheat in most areas and Afghanistan is facing acute food shortage. There are millions of Afghan refugees living in Iran and Pakistan. Any peace plan for Afghanistan will have to involve an international commitment to turn a criminalized drug-based economy back into a traditional agricultural economy.

According to Ahmed Rashid, a noted Taliban expert, US involvement in Afghanistan has been “intermittent, inconsistent, and inconsequential” since the Soviet withdrawal in 1989. He further says that the US has lacked a comprehensive strategic policy on both Afghanistan and the Central Asian region.

After 1996 the Clinton administration was forced to take a public stance against the Taliban. Attempts to persuade the Taliban to extradite Osama Bin Laden failed and so the US fired about 80 cruise missiles at his training camps in Afghanistan late in 1998. There was a shift in US policy and the Clinton administration concentrated on the containment and elimination of the Taliban. The US imposed sanctions on the Taliban early in 1999, followed by UN Security Council sanctions in November the same year. The imposition of sanctions, however, encouraged the Taliban to become more stubborn in their resistance to US pressure.

The UN imposed a second round of sanctions on the Taliban in December 2000. A Joint US-Russia proposal for additional sanctions passed by 13 to 0 votes in the UN Security Council, with China and Malaysia abstaining. It is for the first time that the United States and Russia—the arch Cold War enemies—have collaborated so closely on the issue of terrorism.

The UN resolution gave the Taliban 30 days to close down all terrorist training camps and hand over Osama Bin Laden. Additionally, the sanctions reinforced an air embargo on the Taliban that was imposed in 1999; it froze overseas Taliban assets, most of which are in Pakistan banks; and banned the import of acetic anhydride which is used to convert opium into heroin. The sanctions went into effect on 20 January 2001.

Operation Infinite Justice: The War Against Terrorism

After the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, US President George W. Bush has declared a war on terrorism—“the first war of the twenty-first century.” In view of the strategic experts, an unlimited, all-out conventional attack will be a difficult proposition for the world’s sole Super Power. Besides, such unilateral assaults are unlikely to be popular with the international community.

The Bush administration is determined to build a global coalition against terrorism. In 1991 the US built a coalition of 36 countries against Saddam Hussein to throw the Iraqi forces out of Kuwait. The US sought the endorsement of the UN Security Council for its actions.

The US retaliation poses a tactical challenge to the Bush administration. The tactical model of using paramilitary and special forces to dismantle the drug trafficking networks in Latin America, West Africa, and Europe might be appropriate. The Bush administration will have to develop new and more innovative tactics to meet the menace of terrorism.

It must also be noted that under international law, States are entitled to use of force in self-defence. The US must not make its military action a

singular crusade but mobilise the UN. The UN has, since 1993, been on record, and with the support of all the permanent members of the Security Council has called for the setting up of a new broad-based, fully representative, multi-ethnic government and opposed to terrorism in Afghanistan. On 12 September 2001 the UN Security Council by its resolution 1368 has authorised military action by States against terrorism.

On 28 September 2001 the UN Security Council unanimously adopted the US-led resolution 1373. The resolution calls upon all UN member-states to prevent and suppress the financing of terrorist activities. It is a comprehensive resolution aimed at getting to the root of the terrorist finance network. It also asks the member-states to prohibit their nationals from making any resources or services available to those who commit or participate in terrorist acts.

Besides this, the member-states have also pledged that they suppress recruitment for terrorist groups in their countries and eliminate the supply of weapons to them.

The resolution also provides a framework for collective action of the UN member-states in the fight against terrorism. The resolution calls upon the member-states to deny safe haven to terrorists and those who finance, plan, support, or commit terrorist acts against other states or their citizens.

The above resolution has been viewed as the positive step taken by the UN Security Council signalling the global nature of international terrorism and the need for comprehensive international convention in combating it. India has welcomed UN resolution on terrorism. It has been demanding a comprehensive convention on terrorism and is for a global front against it.

The UN was created to free the world from the scourge of war. The delegates assembled in 1945 at San Francisco to finalize the Charter did not realize that the UN will be required to tackle the scourge of terrorism. This is the ideal time for enabling the UN to become an effective instrument of the new global coalition against terrorism.

In the past the UN has not done enough because radical Islamic countries openly sponsor and support terrorism. Moreover, in a body like the United Nations it is very difficult to arrive at a consensus. There is no universally accepted definition of terrorism in international law. The international legal process should be strengthened. With new forms of terrorism emerging by the day, effective steps should be taken to prevent mass casualties and the killings of innocent people. With cooperation of all member-states the United Nations can play a determinant role in combating global terrorism.

B.N. MEHRISH

Gandhi and Marxism in an Era of Postmodernism

THE FIRST QUARTER of the twentieth century was a very crucial period in the history of our nation. Multiple ideological persuasions, which were contesting among themselves at the turn of the century, started getting consolidated into dominant discourses during this period. The arrival of Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian political scene provided a radically different orientation to the ideology behind the Indian freedom struggle. Gandhian ideas immediately started gripping the imagination of the Indian masses and very soon it became the much-needed ideological horizon of the freedom struggle of India.

The subject of Gandhian political practice was the self-regulating agent of social change. An essentially radical nature of Gandhism can be traced to this new concept of subjectivity being introduced into a largely feudal social structure. As it was the most organised expression of Indian modernity from a generation of English educated Indians, it was quite natural that Indian modernity was influenced to a great extent by the ideas of European liberalism, humanism, and of the autonomous individual. But the impulses of this modernity had to negotiate with the millennium-old social structures based on caste hierarchy, claustrophobic patriarchy, and reactionary religious beliefs and rituals to create a new autonomous individual subjectivity "with all the spiritual wealth that it brings."

Gandhian anti-colonial struggle at large centred on this problematics and the contradictions and ambivalences that it exhibits, while carrying out this daunting task, is the direct consequence of such a complex scenario. Centuries of oppression and exploitation of natives by the European masters were unimpeachable historical experiences for the oppressed, to realise the inherent limitations and exclusivity of the categories of European liberal humanism. In that sense colonial subjects the world over are positioned at a vantage point to have a better vision of the contradictions of the enlightenment project of Europe. This is an advantage which Gandhism enjoyed over all types of European avant garde, neo-marxist and different currents of post modernism, let alone classical Marxism. Colonies were the real political sites where false universals of European bourgeois humanism got exposed and challenged much before the oppositional movements operating within the Western reason.

The master concept of the human was a euphemism for white European male and classical liberals like J.S. Mill who openly excluded the colonial subject from that. It is at this point that Gandhism brings the question of tradition and pre-modern social organisation on to the centre-stage of

political practice. Tradition and its symbols for Gandhi were not just instruments to evoke romantic nostalgia among masses in the anti-colonial struggle. Gandhism imbibes the language and spirit of tradition in order to create a new subjectivity and autonomous individuals and, through their agency, he proposed the possibility of a civilisational alternative to Western imperialism. As Terry Eagleton observes, "traditional or pre-modern societies have a great many merits which our own set-ups lack . . . on the whole they have a richer sense of place, community and tradition, less social anomie, less cut-throat competition and tormented ambition, less subjection to a ruthlessly instrumental rationality, and so on" (Terry Eagleton, *The Illusion of Postmodernism*, Blackwell Publishers, 1996, p. 107). Gandhi centred his political practice on this oppositional stance of traditional societies vis-à-vis modern capitalist social order. It is this perspective that convinced him of the essential nature of the latter as a civilisation which "persuades them [people] to mistake the means of life for the ends of it" (*ibid.*) Classical marxism, it seems, missed this perspective; and, as a consequence, it failed to enrich itself with the language and spirit of tradition and continued to address itself in the universal language of liberation.

For Gandhism, the national liberation struggle was not limited just to the transfer of power from the imperialists to native leadership. It also provided deeper civilisational dimensions to an apparently political struggle. The Gandhian paradigm thus sanctions a critique of capitalist exploitation of natives, coloured people, and even other animal species and earth. Rampantly consumerist to the point of discarding the spiritual well-being of the individuals, capitalism perpetuates a social order which is madly violent to the point of siphoning off the much-needed resources from the areas of child care, water supply, sanitation, and poverty alleviation to nuclear warheads. Maybe, it is so engrossed in the urgencies of proletarian revolution that classical Marxism could not address itself to long-term civilizational and planetary threats from capitalism. The familiarity with a different set of values of traditional societies and the tenacious adherence to the principle of nonviolence helped Gandhi to acquire a better vision of these imminent dangers of capitalism. But none of these historical advantages saved Gandhian ideals from meeting the same fate as the Enlightenment ideals met in Europe. Capitalist classes, once they consolidated the political power, threw the Enlightenment ideas overboard. Indian ruling classes also found it uneasy to cohabit with Gandhi and Gandhism, which resulted in a physical annihilation of him by the Hindu fundamentalists and drifting away from his ideas by the professed followers in the last fifty years of nation-making.

Even from the very beginning of the Gandhian era of Indian struggle for independence, Marxism emerged as a contesting ideology. Fiercely opposed to Gandhian ideology, it presented a radically different analysis of the Indian situation and projected a political programme of socialist

transformation of society. During and after the achievement of political independence, these major discourses continued to engage in a national debate which still occupies the centre-stage. Classical Marxism, as typical of the nineteenth-century German philosophic tradition, is a systematically structured discourse on history, social change, and the crucial role played by the conflict between social classes. Many of the socialist projects really boil down to a single question of realisation of ideas of human emancipation, justice, and equality in practice. The political revolution through the agency of working class is necessary to create material conditions for a radical transformation of society.

But the situation in the present-day world is considerably changed from the situation obtaining in the early decades of our nation-making. A postmodern condition prevails in the contemporary world. Significant changes, substantial reversals have taken place during this period which are capable enough to shake the foundations of the existing modes of discourses. Changes have taken place both on the national as well as on the global levels with theoretical and practical implications. As Terry Eagleton says, there is "no need to imagine such a period at all. It is the one we are living in, and its name is postmodernism." Though it is possible to debate the nature and intensities of this changed scenario, it is an undeniable fact that a paradigmatic shift has occurred in the post-Cold War world. As Fredric Jameson says: "We are within the culture of postmodernism to the point where its facile repudiation is as impossible as any equally facile celebration of it is complacent and corrupt" (Fredric Jameson, *The Ideologies of Theory*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1988, Vol. 1, p. iii). Gandhism and Marxism face a new set of theoretical challenges in such a world. And the only option left for us is a meaningful critical engagement with these challenges.

Classical Marxism has nothing against the splendid ideas of European Enlightenment. Conscious of the limitations of an essentially class-divided social structure, it proposed a revolutionary subversion of the capitalist system from within to facilitate the realisation of these ideas. But the argument that the realisation of its utopia is a "historical necessity" of an immutable telos of social development and working class is the agency of such a colossal task has been questioned by postmodernism. The notion of History with a capital "H," which invariably unfolds itself as the realisation of its internal laws, is part of an Enlightenment baggage of ideas, it will be an undesirable burden for Marxism. Nor is it necessary to adhere nostalgically to a Hegelian type of grand narrative which has sufficiently proved to be an "oppressive closure of history."

Any outright repudiation of any theoretical opposition as reactionary will not help to understand the questions of global importance which postmodernism represents and their problematization of a number of basic categories of our thought most of which are a legacy of Enlightenment. The paradigm shift, which the present stage of our history has brought to birth,

makes it compulsory to revisit the categories of Marxist thought. A reassessment of our habits of thought in the light of new historical evidences is much overdue. Instead of that, if postmodernism is considered as nothing but the ephemeral theoretical reaction to a global political debacle and a momentary logic of a global supermarket, it will be impossible to account for any of its positive attributes, let alone "its single most enduring achievement," the widening of the concepts of exploitation and class to accommodate questions of gender, ethnicity, etc. This has helped to zoom into our field of vision of millions of dumped and discarded often by traditional left as much as by the oppressive system itself. This, in turn, immensely helped to transform the concept of the political by making innumerable groups of victims of a world order visible. Equally commendable are the new dimensions which postmodernism brought into, the concepts like subjectivity, individual autonomy, Reason, Science, Nature, Consumerism, humanism, identity, political practice etc.

It is in this open-ended critical engagement with postmodernism that, as Terry Eagleton observes, "the complicities between classical left wing thought and some of the dominative categories it opposes have been embarrassingly laid bare. . . . And for this one might almost forgive it the whole of its egregious excesses," which of course are many and substantial. One of the major problems with postmodernism is that it rushes to certain conclusions on history and subjectivity which do not necessarily follow from the otherwise brilliant analysis and problematization of our centuries-old convictions. Thus its challenges should enrich our understanding of the nature of contemporary world. While opening up vital new areas of political and theoretical practice, it also evades some of the central issues. The future emancipatory political practices centred on ineluctable values of modernity must necessarily be informed by these new developments. Otherwise, as Terry Eagleton says, "any socialism which fails to transform itself in the light of this fecund, articulate culture will surely be bankrupt from the outset" (Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism*, p. 24).

Since Gandhianism does not fall into the grooves of a systematic narrative in the classical European model, the problems faced by it in the contemporary world are essentially of a different nature. Being a decentred "illogical" assemblage of multiple streams of thought on social welfare, human beings' relationship with nature, resistance to a concept of development solely based on unlimited industrialisation and consumerist desire, Gandhism already foresees many of the problems hotly debated in the postmodern world. It happens so because of the in-built advantage of Gandhism as an ideological "other" of Western civilisation. As an ideological horizon under which all kinds of pluralities and multiplicities are converged against an imperialistic power, Gandhism had to allow more space for pluralities to operate. The most significant fact to be noticed is that it does not posit a reason with capital "R" akin to one found in European modernity. In short, because of the specific historical positioning of Gandhism, it is a

site where all kinds of pluralities, reason and unreason, science and faith, and the religious and the secular amazingly coexisted. This makes Gandhism capable of absorbing the shock waves generated by contemporary cultural imbroglio and adaptable to the radically changed situations. It can also throw light on some of the central problems in relation to the political praxis in a postmodern world.

K. GOPINATHAN

Towards a Casteless Society: The Gandhi-Ambedkar Debate

THE INSTITUTION OF caste has for long been the most problematic and contentious signs of Hindu society. In spite of numerous concerted efforts made to reform or abolish it, the caste system continues to flourish and has decidedly emerged as the single most important factor that determines the working of Indian democracy and society.

Indian society has from time to time questioned its rationale—the rise of heterodox sects in the sixth century B.C., Buddhism, Jainism, and Ajivaka, etc., the all India tradition of the Bhakti movement, the Indian renaissance of the nineteenth century and the various pan-Indian reform movements, the emergence of Gandhi and Ambedkar—all exemplify that “caste” has always agitated the minds of our leading thinkers.

Both Gandhi and Ambedkar intended to provide succour to the untouchables. Although both of them addressed and approached the caste question in different ways, their goal was the same, namely to liberate the untouchables from the slavery of centuries. Gandhi represented the masses of India, while Ambedkar represented the depressed classes. Since both were activists who worked tirelessly for the uplift of the poor and the oppressed, their discourse should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory to or exclusive of each other.

Ambedkar's Critique of the Caste System

It is worthwhile to remember that no Indian thinker before Ambedkar had attacked the inequitable caste system so trenchantly. He did not spare orthodox Hinduism for giving sanction to this evil practice. He considered untouchability, the bane of Hindu society, which, for several millennia, had kept millions of people in the shackles of poverty, exploitation, and

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oppression. He even left Hinduism and embraced Buddhism when he saw no hope for millions of Dalits.

His critique of Hinduism is rational and well-directed. In his essay "Caste in India," Ambedkar critiques the orthodox Hindus for perpetrating the caste system. "There is a strong belief in the mind of orthodox Hindus that the Hindu society was somehow moulded into the framework of the caste system and that it is an organisation consciously created by the *Shastras*. Not only does this belief exist, but is being justified on the ground that it cannot but be good because it is ordained by the *Shastras* and the *Shastras* cannot be wrong."

Ambedkar understood that in the early Vedic period the social set-up was divided into *Varnas*, that is, occupational classes, with no trace of *jati* (caste) system. The Brahmins were the priestly class, the Kshatriyas the military class, the Vaishyas the merchant class, and the Shudras the artisan and menial class (*Rigveda*, Purusha Sukta).

Ambedkar realised that the caste system is meant to preserve a power structure by means of religious and cultural exclusion of others. It is clear that the *Varna* system in the later Vedic period had degenerated into caste system through which social hierarchy was maintained. In his "Caste in India," he recognised the cultural unity prevailing among the various castes in spite of the composite make-up of the Hindu population.

However, by 1936 Ambedkar's early skepticism about the role of Brahmin orthodoxy had firmed up. It was then that he wrote his famous address "Annihilation of Caste" on the invitation of Jat-Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore. This essay is significant because it attracted Mahatma Gandhi's attention.

In his tract, "Annihilation of Caste," Ambedkar first listed some instances of barbaric treatment meted out to the untouchables in India with active support of the *Shastras*, mainly the Hindu social code enshrined in *Manusmriti*. Secondly, he made it very clear that a social revolution which should dismantle the caste system and other evils rampant in the Indian society must precede the gaining of independence by the Indians. Ambedkar refuted the claim that the caste system was only a division of labour. To him, it was also a division of labourers. In his words, "it is an hierarchy in which the division of labourers is graded one above the other." Further, this caste system restricts the choices of social mobility. Ambedkar also wondered why the proponents of Hindu dharma declared the tribals as outcastes.

He lashed out at orthodox Hinduism:

What is this Hindu religion? Now the Hindu religion, as contained in the *Vedas* and *Smritis*, is nothing but a mass of sacrificial social, political, and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. What is called religion by Hindus is nothing but a multitude of commands and prohibitions. Religion in the sense of spiritual principles is not to be found in them. And if it is, it does not form the governing part of a Hindu's Life.

Ambedkar did not want the untouchables to accept and play the role assigned to them by this religion. He saw them as persons who, freed from the shackles of Hindu society, would enjoy freedom and equality and shape their own destiny. He therefore sought to build an independent political identity for the untouchables in the structures of social, economic, and political power. The building of such an identity involved doing away with caste system altogether since it was humiliating for the untouchables. Ambedkar never budged from the position that nothing can emancipate the outcasts except the destruction of the caste system.

Ambedkar refused to accept Gandhi's religious and spiritual approach to the problem of untouchability and insisted on treating it, as Nagraj puts it, as "a civil rights issue." Ambedkar treated the May 1933 fast of Gandhi as directed against the attempts to translate the problem of untouchability into the parlance of modern-day democratic processes in a colonial context. Opposing Gandhi's strategy of social transformation, he emphasized civil rights and equal opportunity in economic matters and social intercourse. He was fully convinced that Hinduism represented the very embodiment of *Avidya*; it can never be regenerated.

Gandhi's Response

In response to Ambedkar's frontal assault on Hinduism on account of the prevalence of the caste system, Gandhi published his rejoinders in *Harijan* (16 July 1936 and 15 August 1936) addressing the various issues raised by Ambedkar. Gandhi too castigated orthodox Hinduism for its reliance on *Smritis* and other scriptures that cannot stand the test of reason and morality. In his words, "nothing can be accepted as the word of God which cannot be tested by reason or be capable of being spiritually experienced." Even *Manusmriti* describes *Varna* at several places on the basis of *guna* (merit) and *karma* (action).

Gandhi was also quick to point out that *Varna* could not be equated with caste. He said: "Caste has nothing to do with religion. It is a custom whose origin I do not know and do not need to know for the satisfaction of my spiritual hunger. But I do know that it is harmful both to spiritual and national growth. *Varna* and *Ashram* are institutions which have nothing to do with castes."

Thus Gandhi defended *Varna* (profession or calling) by saying that each of us has to earn our bread by following our ancestral occupation. He maintained that all *Varnas* are equal and none was considered superior to others. He further held that there was nothing in the law of *Varna* that supported a belief in untouchability.

Gandhi viewed the problem of untouchability as basically a religious and spiritual one. He saw the movement to eradicate untouchability as "a sacred ritual of self-purification," as he considered the untouchables as an integral part of the collective Hindu self.

Gandhi wanted the untouchables to remain within the Hindu fold. He took recourse to reforms as a means of not only improving the socio-cultural positions of untouchables but also of ridding the evils polluting Hindu society and purifying the conscience of the Hindus. That is why he put emphasis on opening up those traditional avenues that had been closed for the untouchables. That is why he opposed the Poona Pact so vehemently because, as he saw it, it paved the way for the division of Hindu society. Gandhi's insistence on temple entry thus combined two objectives. It was meant to open up the temples for the untouchables as well as to convert the orthodox Hindus to the belief that it is wrong to prevent Harijans from entering temples and to treat them as pariahs. He wanted caste Hindus to purge themselves of the prejudices against untouchables whom he called "Harijans." Gandhi was even prepared to renounce Hinduism if it continued to believe in untouchability.

Thus Gandhi was basically a traditional Hindu spiritualist who did not see any fault in the constitutive principles of Hindu society except in its orthodoxy which kept a large number of its members deprived and depressed. Once the conscience of the Hindus was purified, the lot of the untouchables would, he believed, be greatly improved. As such, what was necessary in Gandhi's view was to work for the purification of the Hindu conscience, and, furthermore, to make appropriate reforms in the Hindu social organisation as a means of the upliftment of the Harijans.

Thus both Gandhi and Ambedkar sought, through their ideas, to lay the foundations of a new society, vigorous and dynamic enough to ensure individual and collective well-being. The India of Gandhi's dreams was a casteless society—very much like Ambedkar's own. Gandhi also understood Ambedkar's anger directed at the *savarnas* but he did not endorse it. Although both were greatly concerned about the evils of the caste system and worked tirelessly for its abolition, their paths were different. Ambedkar sought to unify the Dalits by first asking them to let go of a diabolical religion that condemned them to perpetual slavery and degradation. Gandhi appealed to let go of caste (in its heinous form) and showed to the Dalits that even true Hinduism does not sanction the caste system. There is a greater need at present to read Gandhi and Ambedkar as complementary (and not contradictory) philosophers aiming at the same goal of achieving justice for the Dalits.

MANEESHA ROY

Book Reviews

Veena Das, Dipankar Gupta, and Patricia Uberoi, eds, *Tradition, Pluralism, and Identity: In Honour of T.N. Madan*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 1999, pp. 476

This is a collection of eighteen essays written in honour of the distinguished anthropologist, sociologist, and scholar T.N. Madan: All of them, except for four, appeared in a special issues of the journal *Contributions to Indian Sociology* in 1998. These essays are written by well-known Indian and foreign scholars, many of whom have worked in areas close to the research interests of Madan himself. The essays are lucidly written and provocative and cover a wide range of topics including a commentary on two films and a diary written for forty years by an unusual Rajput *thakur*; and are a welcome addition to the existing literature in the field.

Veena Das, who is herself a distinguished scholar and till recently was a professor of sociology at the University of Delhi, presents a lucid overview of the essays which focus on the themes of tradition, pluralism, and identity. She has considered the questions of pluralism and tradition and their relationship with modernity and these themes are amplified and discussed in the various articles.

The location of tradition is analysed in Diana Eck's paper: "The Imagined Landscape: Patterns in the Construction of Sacred Texts and Local Mythologies." The paper outlines the importance of Hindu pilgrimage centres, the production of sacred texts, and local mythologies. But the author refutes the notion that Benares (or Varanasi now) is to the Hindus what Mecca is to the Muslims and Jerusalem to the Jews. She states that Benares is not unique but is duplicated elsewhere. The importance lies, in the words of Eck, in the fact that "Benares is inextricably part of a wider landscape shaped by the duplication and repetition of its features. It is not the centre but one of the multiple centres in polycentric landscape linked to the tracks of pilgrimage."

The question of geography is taken up by R.K. Jain in a paper on the Indian diaspora. He focuses on the diaspora as a case study of globalisation and multiculturalism and raises certain key theoretical issues. The question of the Indian diaspora, as depicted in two popular Hindi films, is also taken up by Patricia Uberoi in her interesting paper entitled "The Diaspora Comes Home: Disciplining Desire in DDLJ."

Traditional ideas of gift and exchange are discussed in two papers, namely "Issue of Right to Food among the Hindus" by R.S. Khare and

"Gifting and Receiving: Anglo-Indian Charity and Its Beneficiaries in Madras" by Lionel Caplan. Khare argues that in India the issue of human rights is "culturally alien and socially rootless." The right to food is organized through the distribution of food at subsidized rates through the PDS (Public Distribution System). But he shows that this is totally inadequate for the poor who take recourse to norms of kinship and family relationships to manage their food requirements. The author shows that this is not unique to India and that the practice exists in other poor countries also and here "both Indian traditions and democracy, though horses of a different breed, must stay yoked together until they learn to pull themselves as a team."

Caplan, on the other hand, focuses on the Anglo-Indian poor and the institution of charitable institutions for them in India from about the end of the eighteenth century. The politics of philanthropy of these Anglo-Indian institutions and the rules which the poor must obey in claiming charity and the relationship between the given and the receiver are spelt out clearly and with a certain amount of humour.

Caste is a subject of intense debate in politics as well as in everyday life. Not surprisingly, therefore, there are two articles on the subject. Patrick Olivelle distances himself from the view that the caste system is based on the concept of purity and that it is located on a hierarchical gradation of purity. Dipankar Gupta, on the other hand, discusses its political implications and argues that there is no systematic relationship between caste numbers and election results. The domination of certain castes is rather due to their access to better organisational resources.

T.N. Madan has extensively discussed and written on secularism, Hindu nationalism, and modernity. His much discussed book, "Modern Myths, Locked Minds: Secularism and Fundamentalism in India" published in 1997, has become a classic and has been praised for its neat and clear exposition of the relationship between anthropology and public culture.

It is therefore quite apt that there are three articles on secularism, a subject which is discussed and debated a lot and which causes a lot of bitterness and ill-will in our contemporary situation. The first article, by Paul Brass, points out that the term is used variously by different people and has different meanings attached to it. He argues that it should be used as a set of practices rather than as an ideology. It is interesting to note that even Jawaharlal Nehru was dismayed by the faulty interpretation of the term "secularism" in his time.

The paper on Babri Masjid by Harold Gould leads the reader through the complex relationship between the Muslim conquerors and their Hindu subjects. The author traces the history of the many attempts of different groups of Hindus right from the year 1855 to take over the Babri Masjid and the lack of support of the then ruler Wajid Ali Shah to prevent this from happening. The politicization of the Babri Masjid did not begin in the 1980s as is generally believed and which led to its destruction in 1992 but

rather from Wajid Ali's time itself. The class interests obviously added to the complexity.

But since Wajid Ali Shah was a Shia, he apparently did not take much initiative in the matter. Thus there were communal and political overtones which finally led to the destruction of the monument in 1992.

In his paper "Twilight of Certitudes: Secularism, Hindu Nationalism," Ashis Nandy starts off by saying that he is presenting a series of propositions whose aim is to "systematise some of the available insights into problems of ethnic and communal violence in South Asia, particularly in India from the viewpoint of those who see communalism and secularism not as enemies but as doubles of each other and that Hindu nationalism is not an extreme form of Hinduism but a modernist creed which seeks to retool Hinduism into a natural ideology and the Hindus into a proper nationality."

Continuing with this thesis, Nandy presents the following paradox: "Secularism as an ideology can thrive only in a society that is predominantly non-secular. Once a society begins to get secularised, the political status of secularism changes. . . ." He argues that when public life in India was overwhelmingly non-modern, secularism as an ideology had a chance. Now that the Indian polity has become largely secularised, the scope of secularism as a creed has declined. Perhaps this postulate explains the rise of the Hindutva forces and the rigid postures of some other religions in India. Nandy argues that the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992 was a demonstration of the fact that there was a backlash against the secularisation of the Indian polity.

There are other interesting articles that add to the value and the wide range of the book. Although it mainly concerns itself with problems of sociology and anthropology, a theoretical knowledge of these subjects is not a precondition to understanding and enjoying the essays. An interested reader will enjoy and profit from the papers included in this volume. The list of authors in this volume is a testament to Madan's standing in the field and his influence on the journal, *Contributions to Indian Sociology*, which he edited and nurtured for a quarter of a century from 1967 to 1991. A biographical note on Madan and an extensive bibliography of his writings will enrich and encourage the readers to consult other material by the noted scholar.

Ravi P. Bhatia

P.D. Kulkarni, ed., *Pilgrimage of Light: Dr Sharatchandra Gokhale—A Versatile Life*, Ameya Prakashan, Pune, 2000, pp. xiii+334

The present volume is a unique outcome of "a bouquet presented to Dr Sharatchandra Gokhale, on the auspicious occasion of his 75th birthday."

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He deserves congratulations and compliments from all the professional social workers, educators, and welfare and development workers for climbing to the highest ladder of leadership in all these subjects and fields. He is a "man" who will consider every tragedy as a blessing in disguise and an opportunity to serve people. No adverse circumstance or situation can deter him from achieving his cherished goal. Of course, in the process of work he has always followed the dictum of Mahatma Gandhi that "purity of means is very important to achieve ends."

All his innovative efforts in a variety of activities have brought Dr Gokhale recognition and as many as twelve awards from local, state, national and international organizations. But all that sits lightly and not tightly on him.

He is a man of cool, confident, independent, and completely uninhibited qualities. He can be considered as one of the models for the younger generations of social workers. Among several celebrities and high achievers he can inspire and become a role model to help many to better their own lives and the quality of their work. He has actually created a special niche for himself by working with leprosy-affected and other disabled people. His heart and mind both work in conjunction. This has enabled him to build a number of institutions. He has a Midas touch but with a difference. His touch does make an object or an item full of life and not a lifeless idol.

The material of the book has been classified into two parts. The first part consists of "A Personal and Professional Profile of Dr Sharatchandra." The second part contains seventeen articles and is devoted to "Fields of Services and Activities of Dr Sharatchandra Gokhale." All the contributors have closely worked with Dr Gokhale. They extended their full support in initiation and consolidation, and the authors have been accurate, objective, critical, and fearless in their presentation and analysis of events and situations. They have not hesitated calling a spade a spade. They have given a "wake-up call" to remain idealist even after thirty years of age to fight all-pervasive corruption and uncounted scams. The plans, programmes, and schemes may not be directed to just creating "vote banks." They should be "people-centred." The basic thrust has to be that "work builds while charity destroys."

The book is eminently readable and very well-produced. Its message is that no problem is so big as being beyond solution nor so trivial that it can be ignored. The saga of the life of Gokhale may provide necessary inspiration to youth to serve the deprived people of India. At the end of the day, there seems no better answer than just to go ahead and take our chances with life as long as we do not hurt others. It goes to the credit of the publisher, Anjali Raje, that there is hardly any printer's devil in the book. The book will serve as an excellent guide to field workers, policy formulators, institution builders, and others interested in welfare and social development. However,

an index and subject-wise bibliography would have greatly enhanced the value of the book.

K.D. Gangrade

Anthony J. Parel, ed., *Gandhi, Freedom and Self-Rule*, Lexington Books, London, 2000, pp. 164

Anthony Parel is at it again—searching for Gandhi deeper and deeper. In 1997, he gave us his well-known book *Hind Swaraj and Other Writings* in the series Cambridge Texts on Modern Politics. In that Parel underscored the distinction that Gandhi drew between “*Swaraj* as self-government or the quest for home rule or the good state, and *Swaraj* as self-rule or the quest for self-improvement.” Parel saw that Gandhi knew from his South African experience that “the reform of the soul was a precondition for a sound politics,” that “there was an irrefragable moral link between order in the soul and order in society.” Gandhi’s tenet was “to suffer harm than to inflict it.”

Parel’s elucidation put *Hind Swaraj* in a more enduring context when he said that “it is not only a tenet for the times, but also a treatise on modern politics”—a mirror which shows what is wrong with us not only at the surface but more so also at the roots. Incidentally, in holding that view Parel differed with Rajmohan Gandhi, who in his *The Good Boatman* described *Hind Swaraj* as “a text for its times, not a text for all time.”

In his quest for the roots, Parel returns this time not with a battery of proverbial blind men to feel and figure out the elephant, but with seven selected perceptive minds to aid a fuller comprehension and understanding of Gandhi. The line-up is Antony Copley, Ronald Terchek, Dennis Dalton, Judith Brown, Fred Dallmayr, Sudarshan Kapur, and Stephen Hay. Together with Anthony Parel, they serve us, in this slim volume of just 164 pages, a rich feast of a moral, political, social discourse. The arena covered is “Gandhian Freedoms and Self-rule; Is there a Gandhian Definition of Liberty;” “Gandhian Autonomy in the Late Modern World;” “Gandhi’s Originality;” “Gandhi and Human Rights: In Search of True Humanity;” “What is Swaraj? Lessons from Gandhi;” “Gandhi and Hindutava: Two Conflicting Visions of Swaraj;” and “Gandhi: Guide to a Better Human Future.”

It is not feasible to recapture here all these daunting dimensions in this limited, albeit valuable, space offered by *Gandhi Marg*. We shall concentrate on what seems to us as the most fierce contemporary issue worldwide, human rights.

We owe a debt to Judith Brown for an illuminating discussion of the issue of human rights as Gandhi saw it. She brings out how fundamentally

different Gandhi read the issue of rights. She recalls that in 1940 Gandhi was in touch with the English writer H.G. Wells "who had drawn up a list of human rights," and "Gandhi told Wells robustly that he would do better by drawing up a list of the duties of man." Wrote Gandhi:

Begin with a charter of Duties of Man . . . and I promise the rights will follow as spring follows winter. I write from experience. As a young man I began life by seeking to assert my rights and I soon discovered I had none, not even over my wife. So I began by discovering performing my duty by my wife, my children, friends, companions and society and I find today that I have greater rights, perhaps than any living man I know.

Brown recalls that in 1947, on the eve of India's Independence, in an article titled "Rights or Duties?" (*Harijan*, 6 July 1947) Gandhi pursued this proposition further to land it on the floor of the Constituent Assembly then in session and for the countrymen outside that august hall:

If all simply insist on rights and no duties, there will be utter confusion and chaos. If instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind. Venture to suggest that rights that do not flow directly from duty well-performed are not worth having. They will be usurpations sooner discarded the better.

Fundamental rights can only be those the exercise of which is not only in the interest of the citizen but that of the whole world.

Gandhi recognized that changing the social order could not be divorced from changing the political order and required serious consideration of the nature of the polity, as well as practical political involvement. He argued that a people's political arrangements should be designed to recognize, sustain, and promote their moral core and capacity for self-control and self-regulation.

Brown recounts: "Gandhi's ideal of *Satyagraha* brought together many of his core beliefs and assumptions. Here were the ideals of the primacy of the spiritual in authentic human existence, the interdependence of all life, and need to discern moral modes of action, and, above all, the essential principle of *ahimsa*, nonviolent compassion in action. It was this bundle of mutually reinforcing ideals that were the foundations of Gandhi's commitment to *Satyagraha* as the only moral means of following Truth in practical situations and combating perceived wrong or un-Truth, which would be in their operation safeguard for the moral integrity and authentic humanity of all concerned in any situation of conflict."

Brown continues that though Gandhi is most notable as the leader of the Indian nationalist movement, he rarely used the English word "independence" in his discourse, but preferred to use the Hindi word *Swaraj*. At its most basic, it means self-rule: but for him it also carried all the moral implications of self-control and self-regulation. "By 1920 he had come to feel that British rule was, as he put it, Satanic. But its evil lay, not

primarily, if at all, in the rule of one national group over another. He believed that it was wrong because it was morally destructive of India's ancient, traditional, and spiritual civilization that had enabled its people to journey after Truth in the context of a small-scale and rural society whose socio-economic arrangements for their common life were compatible with Truth-seeking."

Given this precept and perception, Gandhi saw it with complete ease that "*Swaraj* could not be won in the sense of wresting it from the British; it had to be created from below." He returned to this theme just before his death, with a draft constitution for a much changed Congress after the withdrawal of the British in 1947. He urged the Congressmen to turn their back on political action and party organization and turn themselves into a society to serve the people, for, "the Congress in its present shape and form, that is, as a propaganda vehicle and parliamentary machine, has outlived its use. India has still to attain social, moral, and economic independence." With understandable anguish Judith Brown recalls that "the failure of his people to attain true *Swaraj* in 1947 was one of the great sadnesses of the final months of his life: the violence between different religious groups and the way politicians and administrators took over British patterns of exercising power alike convinced him that India had not achieved the real *Swaraj* he had expounded all his life. This showed how his priority was never a "right" to freedom "but a duty to create the sort of society and polity in which Indians could become genuinely human."

The human rights groups today are primarily pitted against the State pressurising it with such might as they have to make it respect human rights, particularly of the most vulnerable and weaker sections of society. They are outraged at the lack of sensitivity and response of the State and all its arms—civil to *khaki*. But Gandhi foresaw that it was inevitable given the nature of the State:

He [Gandhi] saw the modern State as essentially dehumanizing rather than promoting an authentic humanity. Its monopolization of decision-making and force took away from individuals their duty (and therefore their "right") of spiritual self-realization and self-regulation. Moreover, it was inherently violent, depending on fear and force, and therefore was essentially immoral.

Thus the path of those valiantly fighting the State for human rights is ridden with double jeopardy. First, they have weakened themselves critically by failure to acquire the power to obtain and secure rights by raising their own moral strength first through self-control, nonviolence, and by doing their duty first and steadfastly regardless of the conduct of the other. Secondly, the State, as Gandhi feared, has become more violent and wooden, if not wicked. Its stance is compounded by those pitted against it, by their standing only on one leg of rights, the other of duty put to rest.

Parel reminds us of Gandhi's truth again and again, namely "no self-rule without self-purification." Further: "In this moral universe rights

remain correlated to duties. Just as I have a right to be protected from harm, so I have a duty not to harm others. The ethics of the means is as inviolable as the ethics of the end itself."

At first sight those engaged in the battle for human rights might be repulsed by Gandhi's prescription. They may regard it as pouring cold water over their ardour and idealism. Some may even regard Gandhi as being on the side of the oppressor. All we can say to them, on the strength of the insights drawn from the eight authors of this brilliant book, is that we must allow a moment's reflection on the why of their continuing failure to subdue the "Satanic" state? Is there an option to their present approach which could open the ventilator, if not the door, to success.

L.C. Jain

Acharya Rammurti, J.P. *Ki Vtrasat* (in Hindi), JP's Heritage, Akhil Bharatiya Sarva Seva Sangh, Varanasi, 1999, pp. 234

There is a saying that the grandfather "creates wealth," son/daughter "consolidates" it, and the grandson/daughter either furthers it or maintains it or evaporates it. An application of this analogy fits very well in the case of India.

Mahatma Gandhi as the grandfather was able to create an environment for the mobilization and motivation of the masses to sacrifice everything to achieve the cherished goal of India's independence from the British rule. This was achieved on 15 August 1947 in the wake of the division of the country into India and Pakistan. Gandhi became one of the most disillusioned men who had lost his hold on his followers.

He had earlier declared Jawaharlal Nehru as his political heir and Vinoba Bhave as his spiritual heir. In his scheme, Jayaprakash Narayan (JP) did not figure. He had become the hero of 1942. He belonged to the Socialist Party and not to the Indian National Congress. However, we should not misunderstand that Gandhi had no love and appreciation for his contribution. He became the esteemed hero of the youth. They were ready to emulate and respond to his call.

Indira Gandhi was regarded as a grandchild of Gandhi as she was Nehru's daughter. She took the reins of the country as Prime Minister. She began well but the process of events compelled her to arrest JP.

JP had considered Indira as his daughter due to intimate and close relations between him and Nehru. She also respected this relationship. But she arrested JP when threatened by him about her functioning and deterioration of democratic values and all-pervasive corruption. All values of veneration and respect disappeared.

The dark stage of the country came with the declaration of National Emergency on 26 June 1975. Her main reason for imposing the Emergency

was that some leaders and people were creating ugly situations to disintegrate the country and not to allow the legitimately elected democratic institutions to function.

She successfully used the government apparatus to emerge as the dictator of the country. Indian Constitution was manipulated to serve selfish and personal ends. Her late younger son rose to power and assumed unconstitutional authority. He was above law and did whatever he thought was good in his own reckoning. There was nobody to control and check him. There were some who were vying with each other to get his favour.

The arrest of JP and other leaders as a part of the Emergency made the country rudderless, as was the case in 1942. Because of this situation, discontent amongst people was spreading like wild fire. JP's answer to Acharya on 29 November 1975, at the Jaslok Hospital, in Mumbai, was that the next alternative or step for him and Indira Gandhi was fresh elections.

Strangely enough, Indira Gandhi after a lapse of nineteen months of the Emergency dissolved the Lok Sabha and announced that by the middle of March fresh elections would take place.

Vinoba's utterance of the word "discipline" was interpreted to justify the Emergency. On the contrary, what he meant was to follow the step of Truth and Love. Vinoba's long silence on the arrest of JP proved disastrous for the country like Bhisma Pitahmaha and Dron's silence when Draupadi was being disrobed.

Respected Acharya Rammurti's book *JP Ki Virasat* is an excellent and objective analysis of the period. It has very ably identified that the last century had produced only two leaders who were able to mobilise masses—Gandhi and JP. In fact, after Gandhi he became the undisputed leader of the country. His role, unlike in the "Quite India" movement, was nonviolent and provided non-party leadership. He took the task of capacity building in the youth to take up the responsibility of leadership rather than depend on others.

JP accepted the challenge and got busy in preparing the people for a responsible role in the election. This time the election was unusual as it was between "dictatorship" and "democracy." For JP it was a referendum between his movement and Indira Gandhi's policies and totalitarian regime. In his lectures he very rarely covered any other subject or topic. He toured the whole of India despite his failing health and advancing age. His source of energy was supplied from soul and faith in God. The result was that Indira Gandhi lost the elections. The Indian National Congress was very badly defeated in north India.

The Janata Party came in power both at the Centre and in the States. But the government got busy in running the government rather than working for the "total revolution" which was dear and close to the heart of JP. The various parties which had joined the Janata Party under the leadership of late Morarji Desai soon began to quarrel amongst themselves and lost the confidence of the people.

In reality, power took primacy over ideology and principles. Gandhi classified power into three parts: (i) generating power, (ii) controlling power; and (iii) exercising power. JP may be considered as the creator of power which he was able neither to control nor capture.

Leaders are the product of situations. A leader has to consider people as the soul of any movement. People's sovereignty must be honoured, respected, and maintained. Decentralisation is the lynchpin of a democratic political system. It should not be allowed to be manipulated by political and bureaucratic interference.

JP's main concern was to awaken people and strengthen the base of people's power. The author has very beautifully and successfully given in detail the differences between the two stalwarts—JP and Vinoba—who had worked together for twenty years. Vinoba wanted JP to withdraw his Bihar movement and not to struggle against the Establishment headed by Indira Gandhi. According to JP, the Bihar movement was led by youth and the movement had gone so far that its withdrawal would lead to serious consequences. This made the two leaders part company with each other. The country is still paying the price as the followers of the two leaders are not yet able to work as a united force.

The country is far away from the cherished dream of Gandhi and JP to evolve people's participatory democracy, rather than representative one, as envisaged in the Constitution. The salvation of people lies in their own hands. It cannot be passed to others as stressed by Gandhi in his theory of "concentric circles." JP's health and his untimely death did not allow the "total revolution" to take firm "roots" in the Indian soil. It remained merely an idea in the minds of some of his followers.

JP's diary written in the jail, where he was put during the Emergency, is a rebuttal of all the charges levied against him by Indira Gandhi. It will be useful for all of us to read the diary to understand JP's point of view and the real message behind his call for the "total revolution." It also gives an account of the graphic changes in his thoughts as well reflection of his life. Having a pure and silver heart, JP had failed to understand the political leaders of the day. Their politics were mostly based on an inspiration derived from their self-interest or to create a "vote bank" for themselves.

The foundation of present India, as believed by most Indians, has been laid by a single family consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, his daughter Indira Gandhi, and his grandson Rajiv Gandhi. The development model adopted by them did not suit Indian conditions as it was mostly borrowed and based on the Western pattern. JP had hoped that the torch of his "total revolution" would be taken over by the radical Sarvodaya workers; as a neutral, committed, dedicated, and united force, they would serve as a "watch-dog" and would not allow the country to derail from the Gandhian path.

Acharya Rammurti is an outstanding scholar and a thinker having conceptual clarity and and gifted with a rare quality of objectivity in

presenting his in-depth analysis of JP in a lucid and simple style. The book gives an insight into various factors, operating in the politics of the period of the Emergency and uncovers many doubts and questions which have not so far received an authentic and unbiased treatment.

The book is an excellent projection of people's power, methods, and techniques to be adopted to bring the Kingdom of God on earth. The lesson one can draw from the book, as Mahatma Gandhi said, is, "no sacrifice is worth its name if done with a long face." Sacrifices are boundless. Revolutions can be compared to a game of cricket. Like cricket, a revolution is a game of uncertainties. We could be cruising along happily, confident of scoring a century when an odd googly catches you unawares and the wickets come tumbling down. As in cricket, there is no room for complacency, the same is the case with revolutions. The geriatric leadership of JP has been the greatest problem of "total revolution." It is no doubt "Total Revolution," as conceived by JP. But it has not taken off. However, I am pretty sure that JP's reputation as a great leader and a lovable person will remain unsullied.

An English edition of the book will be useful for the people not knowing Hindi. It is a matter of a little regret that the Acharya has taken too long a time to bring this remarkable book to light.

K.D. Gangrade

Ellen J. Chrystal, ed., *The Courage To Stand Alone (Conversations with U.G. Krishnamurty)*, New Age Books, Delhi, pp. 126

Basically we float in an ocean of thoughts—absorbing some, repelling others. Thoughts are living entities. Individuals cease but thoughts outlive them. Thought-culture is an art of thinning out and pruning out ideas. Mental journey through the vehicle of thoughts teaches us the lesson of differentiating between chaff and grain. In this process of exposure and identification and dichotomy between the virtual and the real, we gradually narrow down the gap between value-based thinking and value-starved thinking. Life is not a well-cut garden of readymade thoughts. It is an inevitable process for everyone to pass through its different crying, weeping, whispering, and smiling sound effects of life.

Conversations with U.G. Krishnamurty in his book "The Courage to Stand Alone" definitely liberate us from the mental prison of our ignorance. This book defines life distinctly and refines our angle of vision. With primary accent on thought leadership, the articulate and eloquent style of conversation with the writer in a question-answer format creates a situation where we learn the difference between holding a hand and chaining the soul. The tone and temper of answering all the questions by U.G.

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Krishnamurty are in an iconoclastic style. That is why it makes inroads into the psyche of the readers.

In fact, conversations with Krishnamurty during his stay in Amsterdam for 21 days in 1982 with different writers, journalist, publishers, and thinkers was transcribed and edited by the Dutch host writer Ellen J. Chrystal. This took the form of the present book.

The foreword of the book has been written by the famous film-maker Mahesh Bhatt who aptly observes that Krishnamurty offers us no God, no teaching, no spiritual salvation, and no hope. On the contrary, he demolishes everything we have ever stood for, Krishnamurty is not a *guru*, priest, teacher, or a cult. He burns with passion and without purpose. He is as lost without you as you are without him. His light dies if you do not reflect it. Jeffrey M. Masson, a reputed American writer on the psychological plane, has also outlined a note about the human face of U.G. Krishnamurty.

There are three parts of the book entitled "You Don't Have to Do a Thing," "I Cannot Create Hunger in You," and "Nice Meeting You and Goodbye."

The first part runs with the current of spontaneity and transparency of the natural flow of life. The second part is charged with the concept that you cannot acquire world of knowledge unless you have a strong appetite for its acquisition. The third part is characterised by interactive style with reality exposures of day-to-day life of contemporary times.

Krishnamurty does not believe in cult and *gurudom* because it creates pantheons, followers, blind allegiance, and divisions, and sub-divisions of mindsets. He opens his mind by pronouncing that all teachers and teachings should be destroyed because Messiahs are responsible for the mess around us. U.G. believes that the so-called *Gurus* of contemporary times are not satisfying our spiritual hunger; instead, they have commercialised their cult like a shop and people are buying spurious goods from these shops. U.G. deplors that techniques sold by these shops to us are like junk food. He remarks that there is no use of feeding ourselves with that type of food because it has burnt our natural hunger. On this point U.G. comes to us in different ways and words with new food.

This writer believes that everytime a thought is born, we are born. The driving seat cannot be located in any particular individual. What is there is a thought. Whenever a thought takes birth, we create an entity or a point, and in reference to that point we experience things. The world we experience around us is also from that particular point of view. The writer considers thought to be fundamentally essential for living organisms.

The cutting-edges of the arguments of Krishnamurty presented in this book are very penetrating. He defines the subtle difference between society and individual in a very simple way. Society is interested in its continuity and permanence. It is interested only in maintaining the status quo. That is where thought is helpful for the society for its conventional nurturance of a set pattern. Society is interested in channelising every thought of ours in that particular direction. Society is interested only in fitting every individual

into its framework and maintaining its continuity. When we endeavour to march ahead of the structured pattern of the life and society, we make a striking departure from the beaten track. Then we enter into the domain where we have the potential of visualising and actualising possibilities.

U.G. talks about death, life, society, culture, hunger, vegetarianism, anger, and the goal of civilization and its problems. For example, at one place, he says that we are interested in solutions rather than in problems that makes it difficult for us to look at a the problem. U.G. considers anger as a tremendous outburst of energy. By destroying that energy through any means, we destroy the very expression of life itself. This is powerful logic of U.G. that the mere talk of love is one of the most absurd things. There must be two individuals for the complete formation of love. Similarly kindness needs two—either we are kind to somebody or we are kind to ourselves.

At some places in the book, U.G. has tried to understand the essence of life in piecemeal according to the convenience of his logic. That is why the vision of life in its totality takes a back seat. To substantiate his viewpoint, U.G. opines that religion is not going to save man, neither will atheism, nor communism, nor any of those systems. But he has not given the way out with satisfying illustrations. Stringent criticism of the cult of teacher and teachings by U.G. does not seem to be logically tenable because so many enlightened *Gurus* have enriched our philosophical traditions and have remained the prime mover behind socio-religio-cultural reform movements. No individual is completely perfect and flawless. What is required is to imbibe the spirit and content of perfectness (whether partially or substantially) from any individual. Since the transcribed contents of the book flow out from videotaped conversations of U.G., the book lacks coherence and consistency in respect of issues explicit in certain answers in the wider perspective.

He demolishes the structure of traditional concepts but creates a vacuum in the minds of readers who desperately search for full-length fitting of alternative mental thinking of U.G. who gives only clues or hints for understanding certain issues but does not give full exposition of facts. He increases the curiosity of readers but fails to quench their inquisitive thirst in respect of intriguing issues of life.

In the light of these limitations of the frontiers of the book in the question-answer format, the reach and range of this book should be understood properly. It is not essential that the mindset of readers should invariably synchronise with those individuals who have asked questions from U.G.

All in all, however, the book is worth reading because it adds value-addition in our life. U.G. deconditions and unloads our minds from the undesirable (but friendly) burden of so many concepts and creates space for more healthy, constructive, and critical mental temper.

Mrinal Kant Pandey

Lalita Joshi

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Some Publications of the Gandhi Peace Foundation

Conflict Resolution and Gandhian Ethics

by Thomas Weber

pp. 180 (HB) Rs 230

This book will prove most useful to those interested in the philosophy of nonviolence and specially to social scientists and activists by providing them with a coherent theoretical framework on which to base their actions.

Nonviolent Revolution in India

by Geoffrey Ostergaard

pp. 419 (HB) Rs 180

Written by a sympathetic British scholar and based partly on interviews with Sarvodaya activists, the book provides a detailed account of the Gandhian movement in India during the Emergency of 1975-77. It will be of special interest to those concerned with the application of Gandhian philosophy in politics.

Hind Swaraj: A Fresh Look

edited by Nageshwar Prasad

pp. 254 (HB) Rs 120

Based on a national seminar on Hind Swaraj, this book gives a penetrating account of the meaning and relevance of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* in the contemporary context. It touches upon the fundamental problems of contemporary society and tries to see if Gandhi has an answer to issues like modernity, decentralisation, and morality in the post-Gandhian period.

Nonviolence: Contemporary Issues and Challenges

edited by Mahendra Kumar

pp. 291 (HB) Rs 360

The essays contained in this volume are inspired by the conviction that a nonviolent order requires a new vision so as to discourage the forces of violence and encourage the forces of nonviolence. Each contribution has brought rich insights to bear on his or her analysis based on painstaking research and practical experience gained in the field.

Essays in Gandhian Economics

edited by Romesh K. Diwan and Mark Lutz

pp. 250 (HB) Rs 155

This book brings together a number of essays on Gandhian economics written by eminent economists. These essays present a comprehensive view of Gandhian economics and develop alternative principles of economics of love and sharing as against those of greed and envy. Various policy alternatives and institutional frameworks consistent with Gandhian economics are presented in this volume which provides a basis for a course in Gandhian economics at the university level.

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Documentation

The City of Hiroshima

Peace Declaration

6 August 2001

[On the first August sixth of the new century, the citizens of Hiroshima, living witnesses to "the century of war," declared that they will do everything in their power to make the twenty-first century one of peace and humanity, free from nuclear weapons. The following is the text of their "peace declaration"—Editors].

We believe that humanity means our willingness to listen to the voices of all sentient beings. Humanity also means nurturing children with loving care. It means valuing reconciliation in creating the human family's common future. It means rejecting violence and reaching peaceful agreements through the power of reason and conscience. Only humanity can assure the abolition of nuclear weapons; only humanity can ensure that nuclear weapons, once eliminated, are never re-invented.

In the twenty-first century, Hiroshima intends to soar to new heights as a city of humanity. We intend to create a spiritual home for all people, a home with compassion, a source of creativity and energy for our planet's children and youth, a city offering a personal place of rest and comfort for all, young or old, male and female.

However, the calendar end to "the century of war" has not automatically ushered in a century of peace and humanity. Our world is still darkened not only by the direct violence of local conflicts and civil wars, but also by innumerable other forms of violence including environmental destruction, violence-promoting publications, images, and games. Now, through advanced science and technology, some are trying to extend battlefields into space.

We need our world leaders first to look at this reality humbly and unflinchingly. They must also possess a strong will to eliminate nuclear weapons, sincerity in abiding by their agreements, which are crystallizations of human wisdom, and finally, the courage required to make reconciliation and humanity top priorities.

Many *hibakusha* and their kindred spirits, feeling called upon to shoulder the fate of the entire human race, have sought the abolition of nuclear weapons and world peace with a will strong enough to cut through solid

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rock. For *hibakusha*, the living hell suffered fifty-six years ago remains vivid and present even today. Thus, communicating in living form to coming generations the *hibakusha's* memories, their sense of responsibility, and their unrelenting will is the most dependable first step towards survival through the twenty-first century and on to the twenty-second century, connected by a bridge of hope.

To that end, the City of Hiroshima is investing in the revitalization of peace education, in the broadest sense of that term. We are striving, in particular, to establish Hiroshima-Nagasaki peace study courses in major universities around the world. The basic framework for such courses will be constructed from the accomplishments of the Hiroshima Peace Institute and similar institutions where academic endeavour based on unalterable fact have brought humankind closer to truth.

This week, the citizens of Hiroshima and Nagasaki are hosting the World Conference of Mayors for Peace through Inter-city Solidarity. The conference has been organized for the express purpose of abolishing nuclear weapons and realizing world peace through truth-guided solidarity among cities, the entities that will carry most prominently the torch of humanity in the twenty-first century. It is no mere fantasy to believe that in the future, member cities of this conference will lead other municipalities in expanding the circle of nuclear-free authorities until ultimately the entire Earth becomes one solid nuclear-free zone.

Hiroshima calls on the national government of Japan to play an active role as a mediator in Asia in creating nuclear-free zones and implementing confidence-building measures. We further expect that, as a matter of national policy, Japan will initiate an effort to conclude a global treaty that prohibits nuclear weapons for ever. We demand that our government properly value the contributions made by *hibakusha*, wherever they may live, which should culminate in improved relief measures that respect their rights. Finally, we demand that our national government forge the will to abolish nuclear weapons and, in accordance with the preamble of our constitution, work with Hiroshima in the effort to create a century of peace and humanity.

On this first August sixth of the twenty-first century, it is by vowing to spread the peace of this moment through the entire twenty-first century and throughout the world that we pay our sincerest respects to the souls of all the atomic bomb victims.

TADATOSHI AKIBA
Mayor
The City of Hiroshima

Contributors

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Marx and Gandhi in the Twenty-first Century*

Surendra Mohan

THE FIRST CENTURY of the third millennium has proceeded with an accelerated pace in the direction of extensive militarisation. Intensive bombing of Afghanistan by the United States of America has reduced that hapless country into a rubble. This could be considered as in continuation of the operations in Iraq, Kosovo, and Serbia in the last decade. In the new century, the world has moved towards intensive exploitation of the natural resources of the Southern hemisphere by the capital of the Northern, which, in fact, is the world capital, and to further destruction of our physical environment. This world capital continues, unabated, the mobilisation of the resources, human as well as physical, of the whole world, for the benefit of the few. It is another matter that all the manipulations are justified on the plea that they strengthen human freedom and well-being. When Karl Marx studied the rise of capital in his time, he correctly diagnosed its basic principle that all production and commerce has profit as its motive and shall lead to increasing appropriation of the labours of the working classes. He had argued that free competition in an unequal world shall create ever larger monopolies and, consequently, industrialists in various countries, after garnering capital at home, will intensify the colonisation of the Third World, thus setting up colonial-imperialist wars. All these and other predictions like recurrent economic crises made by him were borne out by subsequent events.

Technology has moved in the direction which maximised profits and gave the colonialists most effective weapons of mass destruction. The new phase of space technology and genetic engineering unforeseen by Karl Marx or others has provided to the already powerful and the rich the surest

* This article is the text of the Twenty-eighth Gandhi Peace Foundation Lecture delivered by the author at the Gandhi Peace Foundation, New Delhi, on 30 January 20002

means to enslave human minds and feed human bodies with near-poisonous foods. The motive is to serve the basic objective of profit in "free" competition. The march of technology in the direction that was determined for it by capital world will be unfolding new wonders. However, in the present balance of forces, all of them would be appropriated by the few for the further exploitation of the millions.

In order to build a regime of free competition and free trade, the post-war GATT has been replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO). Its operations have resulted in putting further legal shackles on the least developed and the developing countries. Consequently, before the WTO ministerial conference held in Doha in November last year, seventy poor countries jointly informed its Director-General that they are getting de-industrialised and their agriculture had been ruined.

The coming together of the world's capital under the leadership of the monopolists of the United States has also brought about a coalition of the most lethally armed countries. The system to guarantee international peace and prevent wars created in the form of the United Nations has, as its main agency, the influential Security Council which, again, is dominated by the afore-mentioned powers. Thus the United Nations is sometimes described as the United Stations. Not only in international affairs, but also in internal matters, power has come to be centralised in the hands of a select bureaucracy. Acting in collusion with capital, this group has vindicated the Marxist characterisation of the State as the executive committee of the exploiting class. Democratic systems have also been bureaucratised everywhere; and, in poor countries, plutocrats manipulate them even better.

Marx, the young Hegelian philosopher, burning with the passion for equality, drew largely upon the work of his colleague Frederick Engels on the "conditions of the working classes in England." His starting-point was the exploitation that the study had described. Gandhi, on the other hand, was appalled by the violence prevalent in the society. He abhorred violence. For, he considered life, including human life, as the noblest divine gift, and its destruction in any manner revolted him. He sought source of violence, and understood that man's lust for more material goods led him to inflict pain on other human beings. He found that this lust also made him to subordinate nature to his consumerist desires. While emphasising that nature had provided sufficient gifts for use of humankind and other species, he said in that famous phrase that there was enough for the satisfaction of everyman's need, but not for any man's greed. Moving from violence to exploitation resulting in economic and social disparities which led to dominance of the powerful and the rich over the poor and the weak, and the decay of one section owing to deprivation and the other because of insatiable lust, he wanted a radical transformation of this entire system.

Gandhi said that every person had the fullest right to satisfy all his needs: food, clothing, and security from sickness, advance in knowledge

and recreation. He advocated the use of the most advanced technology which achieved this goal. However, he did not favour that anyone should accumulate more than what he needs. In fact, he called it theft. Nor did he accept a technology which would create conditions in which one man could enslave, or dominate over, other men. He did not glorify poverty; nor sacrifice just for the sake of it. It was another matter, however, if some people adopted austerity to serve other human beings. Having decided to work for a system in which violence, exploitation, inequality, and greed had no place, Gandhi proceeded to pronounce a code of ethics for the society and for the individual. Ethics, with truth ensconced in the center, guided all spheres of life, primarily economics. He was in favour of an economic system in which every person earned his bread by what he called bread labour, a system in which there was full employment which gave everyone decent living. In Indian conditions where capital was scarce and labour was abundant, this could only be a technology by which mass production of goods by the masses could be resorted to. Education was to be geared to the creation of this kind of production; hence, the idea of basic education.

To eliminate dominance and exploitation, a system of self-governance of small communities is the logical step; for, authority away from the people whom it affected could easily turn to tyranny. He therefore emphasised devolution of political and administrative power. He argued that these communities will conduct their business by consensus, depend on the use of local resources for the satisfaction of their needs, but coordinate with the neighbouring communities for mutual help. This system he called *Swadeshi*. Gandhi, while pointing out that nature has blessed man with plenty, was in favour of limiting one's wants and pleaded austerity.

The tragedy today is that the society as it has evolved is farther away from the ideals of Karl Marx and Mahatma Gandhi. Karl Marx had thought that along with the progress of capitalism, its antithesis, the proletariat, shall grow to overthrow it, and colonialism shall be challenged by the enslaved peoples. While the second hypothesis proved correct, the first did not. The working classes were being influenced by the comparative prosperity and social security, after having being driven as cattle from their lands. By 1904, a whole school of thought had emerged in the labour movement which pleaded for reformism and was declared revisionist by the orthodox Marxists. During the last one hundred years, the creation of the welfare state and provision of social security in the developed countries has coopted the working class into the capitalist system. The Marxist hypothesis that the middle classes will be pushed to pauperisation and will have to join the proletariat has been falsified. On the other hand, there is a big service sector and independent professions also, just as some sections of skilled workers are no less part of the lower middle class. Therefore the process of transformation as envisaged by Karl Marx has become an impossibility. With the resources of education, information, and

entertainment in the hands of capitalists, it has become easy for the latter to spend false consciousness also. The strong Soviet system, calling itself Marxist, crumbled owing to authoritarianism, centralisation of political power, corruption, and consumerism. In any case, it had suppressed solidarity and equality, the core Marxist values. In China also, consumerism and great disparities between regions and groups of individuals have appeared.

While the vision of Karl Marx has proved impractical, although his analysis of capital has come out to be true, the vision of Mao Dze Dong has also failed. He had called for the Country to overrun the City. However, in present-day China where his followers are in power, the city is gradually seeping into the country. Yet another protagonist of radical transformation had asked for the setting up of Focaults but as against the military might of the dictators in South America, they were easily suppressed. Now only the memory remains. Marcuse, having despaired of the workers, had hoped that the student and youth power would provide the sinews of revolution. The events of 1968 in France and Germany have been ascribed to his inspiration. However, the youth today are glamourised more by television and consumer goods than by revolutionary spirit.

Gandhi's followers hardly followed him. They followed the West and its civilisation which to Gandhi was totally unacceptable. Those who remained true to his ideas have not been able to challenge the system in any meaningful manner. In fact, Gandhi was portrayed as a proponent of nonviolence, truth, and peace. However, the context that he always rebelled against violence, falsehood, and war was forgotten. His ideas of decentralist economy and polity as also his emphasis on ethical behaviour have certainly permeated the consciousness of man, but greed, the desire to dominate and acquire material goods have become prime motives in the lives of men.

The twenty-first century therefore presents a paradox both for Marxists and for Gandhians. The transformation of society that they sought is the crying need. Yet there is no material force capable of achieving it. Even those nations which felt after the ministerial meetings of the WTO in Doha that they must create a coalition of the poor to fight for their rights, abjectly surrendered at the last moment. However, hundreds of thousands of persons from various walks of life joined the protest against the machinations of the group of eight developed countries. Possibly, their solidarity will grow and the issues of the degradation of the environment, displacements of millions owing to the big dams, comparative disadvantages suffered by those engaged in the agriculture sector, the unemployed whose number is increasing fast, and the sensitive intelligentsia which opposes homogenisation of culture as also bio-culture at the cost of their rich diversity will mobilise themselves in larger numbers. But then their sights must be clear. A comparative austerity in living, an ethical code of behaviour which gives proper respect to all the vulnerable sections of society and which refuses to consider woman as a commodity will have to be adopted.

Nor can centralisation of political and economic power or any system of exploitation or domination would constitute an alternative, which is what we are looking for.

This vision is nearer to Gandhi than to Marx, although in the final picture, both are alike. Moreover, the most modern weapons of violence can be defeated only by nonviolence. For this not only those who are the actual victims but everybody who feels that the system is anti-human and unjust will have to volunteer himself. That would require a cultural revolution so as to create a moral force. Not the hegemony of a party or a class, but an acutely conscious citizenry is required. Not a charismatic individual, but self-awareness by hundred million individuals is the need of the hour. Personal example, localised passive resistance, and incessant education alone can trigger it.

Does this vacuum of ideological systems provide humankind an opportunity for effective innovation to realise our core values of humanism, equality, fraternity, and freedom, in our time? Human ingenuity could take it as a challenge and formulate appropriate answers.

Some Publications of the Gandhi Peace Foundation

Conflict Resolution and Gandhian Ethics

by Thomas Weber

pp. 180 (HB) Rs 230

This book will prove most useful to those interested in the philosophy of nonviolence and specially to social scientists and activists by providing them with a coherent theoretical framework on which to base their actions.

Nonviolent Revolution in India

by Geoffrey Ostergaard

pp. 419 (HB) Rs 180

Written by a sympathetic British scholar and based partly on interviews with Sarvodaya activists, the book provides a detailed account of the Gandhian movement in India during the Emergency of 1975-77. It will be of special interest to those concerned with the application of Gandhian philosophy in politics.

Hind Swaraj: A Fresh Look

edited by Nageshwar Prasad

pp. 254 (HB) Rs 120

Based on a national seminar on Hind Swaraj, this book gives a penetrating account of the meaning and relevance of Gandhi's *Hind Swaraj* in the contemporary context. It touches upon the fundamental problems of contemporary society and tries to see if Gandhi has an answer to issues like modernity, decentralisation, and morality in the post-Gandhian period.

Nonviolence: Contemporary Issues and Challenges

edited by Mahendra Kumar

pp. 291 (HB) Rs 360

The essays contained in this volume are inspired by the conviction that a nonviolent order requires a new vision so as to discourage the forces of violence and encourage the forces of nonviolence. Each contribution has brought rich insights to bear on his or her analysis based on painstaking research and practical experience gained in the field.

Essays in Gandhian Economics

edited by Romesh K. Diwan and Mark Lutz

pp. 250 (HB) Rs 155

This book brings together a number of essays on Gandhian economics written by eminent economists. These essays present a comprehensive view of Gandhian economics and develop alternative principles of economics of love and sharing as against those of greed and envy. Various policy alternatives and institutional frameworks consistent with Gandhian economics are presented in this volume which provides a basis for a course in Gandhian economics at the university level.

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The Ontology of Gandhian Political Economy

B.N. Ghosh

BEFORE EMBARKING ON an elaborate discussion on the ontology of Gandhian political economy, it is pertinent to make it clear that an analysis of Gandhian economic thought, as has been done by many authors, will show that it is diametrically opposite to the basic ideas of orthodox economics. A few instances from the economic ideas of M.K. Gandhi will substantiate such claims. First, Gandhi was against the idea of profit maximisation philosophy of firms because it leads to concentration of wealth and power in a few hands.

Second, Gandhi wanted small-scale and cottage industries because these industries maximise employment and labour absorption. In these industries, labour is employed beyond the point where the marginal productivity of labour equals the wage rate (that is, the neoclassical rule of labour use efficiency is violated).

Third, Gandhi was in favour of maximisation of labour welfare and labour output. He hated machinery because it created conflict between labour and capital. Gandhi never advocated large-scale production based on machinery in the context of a labour-surplus economy like India and also because the capitalistic system was not embedded in a traditional society of Gandhi's India.

Fourth, there is no place for capital accumulation and capitalist method of industrialisation in Gandhi's scheme of development.

Gandhi was in favour of the maximisation of social welfare. His concept of welfare compasses the growth of the total human personality based on full-scale capability expansion with empowerment and entitlement. Such a concept of welfare is diluted with spiritual and ethical values. Gandhian concept of man is different from the neoclassical *homo economicus* or economic man. Although, as Gandhi observes, man is imperfect, his basic character is

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not inherently bad. If a man is bad, it is because of the fact that he is misguided and he lacks in proper education, advice, and direction. Gandhi, conceivably, had two concepts of man: one is the overt aspect of man's character which is imperfect, self-centred and materialistic, and the ideal normative character of man which needs to be moral, sympathetic, and helpful to others. In the Gandhian political economy, most of the conflict arises because of the contradiction between the overt nature of materialistic man (the so-called world rationality) and the morally upright man. Conflicts are the results of incongruence between worldly rationality and morality. Gandhi's ideal man is the one with self-prestige, dignity, moral conscience, ethical values, and the spirit of dedication and sacrifice. Gandhi observes that if men are not conscious of their duties and not protective of their rights, and are too callous, then they should be blamed for their exploitation.

A glimpse of Gandhi's essential economic philosophy from the points enumerated above, will show that it is fundamentally different from the philosophical tenets of the orthodox economics. Therefore Gandhi was not an orthodox economist nor did he subscribe to the philosophy of neoclassical economics. Gandhian economic ideas may be subsumed, *prima facie*, in the category of political economy mainly because his ideas were non-neoclassical in character and essence. Many other substantive categorical reasons will be analysed in the subsequent discussion.

Gandhian Political Economy (GPE) is a brand new subject which the present article is attempting to develop for the first time. As an emerging discipline and as an operational system, GPE needs to provide clear-cut answers to the following questions. What is the ontology of GPE? What is its scope and subject-matter? What is its methodological boundary? These are some of the questions which are briefly addressed in this paper.

As a system of political economy, the GPE is basically purported to be the study of the economic impact of political actions, and political impact of economic actions in a state or community. The interactions in the GPE are to be noticed among the society, economy, and the institutions. An analysis of the GPE abundantly makes it clear that socio-economic behaviour of human beings is considerably influenced by the existing institutions, the nature of which can also be influenced by many autonomous changes in human behaviour. Institutions themselves in the course of time undergo evolutionary changes in sympathy with social, political, and economic changes. In the GPE, the important basic institution which can shape and mould human behaviour and action towards the achievement of self-sufficiency through cooperation, nonviolence, and truth are the families, communities, and the state. The interactions among these institutions are extremely necessary for the actualisation of the unity of life with the unicity of purpose to achieve limited material self-sufficiency without dependency or violence. The GPE has placed so much emphasis on the importance of basic institutions that it can be perceived as a part of institutional political

economy in the tradition of Thorstein Veblen¹ and others. The GPE in many respects is quite conspicuously different from other systems of political economy; for, it derives its élan vital from the metaphysics of truth and spirituality.

Modelisation of GPE

An attempt can now be made on the modelisation of the GPE. The epistemic foundation of the GPE is the ethical norm which is based on some form of natural religion (deism). The methodological boundary of the Gandhian political economy is demarcated by the deontic consideration of duties, and truth and nonviolence. For judging every action and its reaction with respect to socio-economic policy, the guiding principle is the social welfare maximisation. It is in this sense that the GPE can be looked upon as a sort of social utilitarian approach. But here it is necessary to make it clear that the GPE is not concerned with hedonistic individual utility maximisation but with social welfare maximisation. The GPE is more and less than an utilitarian approach. It is less than an utilitarian approach because it does not recognise the basic utilitarian principle of greatest good of the greatest number of people. It is more than an utilitarian approach because it does not fully subscribe to the narrow view of individual utility maximisation of the majority of people and goes beyond the individual utility to social utility (including everybody's utility, happiness or satisfaction). The GPE is for the maximisation of happiness of not only the majority of people but of all the people. It should be remembered that Gandhi's concept of utility is different from that of the utilitarian concept. Gandhi's concept of utility is based on ethical norms and principles, and it has moralistic overtones unlike the utilitarian notion.

The epistemic basis of GPE is apparently the Hindu religious philosophy, but the categorical imperatives like truth, nonviolence, love towards neighbours, caring for the poor and down-trodden, devotion of one's own duties and so on, which abundantly find their expression in the GPE, are also the essence of all other existing religions. These are, in a sense, universal nomological axioms. Thus the Gandhian political has universal appeal as a systemic study for an ideal society, polity, and economy. Here lies the fundamental difference between the Marxian political economy and the Gandhian political economy: whereas the former is anti-religious in essence, the latter is more in consonance with religiosity and ethics.

There are indeed many similarities and differences between the Marxian and the Gandhian political economy. However, a few cardinal points may be mentioned here. Like Marx, Gandhi during his time was very much concerned with the deteriorating economic conditions of the working class under the system of capitalist method of production. The main burden of the GPE is to analyse the nature, causes, and cures of increasing poverty, deprivation, exploitation, and inequalities of the Indian masses under the

British rule. Gandhi was much influenced by the Marxian principle of distribution: from each according to his ability to each according to his needs. Gandhi fought throughout his life to ensure the payment of need-based wages to the working masses of India, although he was not successful. However, despite his profound regard for the Marxian insight and sympathy for the poor working people, Gandhi had many ideological and methodological differences. Gandhi, unlike Marx, never approved of violence or unfair means to achieve the desired objectives. Means are very important in the GPE, and it is the means which justify the ends, and not the other way round. The GPE has remained essentially metaphysical in essence because it is based on the principles of truth, nonviolence, and *anasakti* (non-attachment of materialistic possession).

The Marxian methodology of historical materialism never appealed to Gandhi. The GPE is based neither on historical methodology nor on materialistic philosophy. In order to appreciate the differences between Marx and Gandhi on this count, it would be imperative to briefly discuss the Marxian theory of historical materialism.

Historical materialism or materialistic interpretation of history constitutes the scientific core of Marxist theory. Engels credited Marx with being the originator of historical materialism. Historical materialism is an empirical theory rather than a formal philosophy. According to Marx, economic structure of a society, constituted by its production relations, is the real foundation of that society. It is the basis on which rises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. On the other hand, in a society, production relations themselves correspond to a definite stage of development of the society's material productive forms. In this way, the mode of production of material life conditions social, political, and intellectual life process in general.

The general course of human history is dependent on the growth or the productive forces. The productive forces will include, among other things, means of production, knowledge, labour forces, skills, and experience. These productive forces are the resources of the society which can be used for material production.

The application of *dialectical materialism* to the interpretation and analysis of human society is called *historical materialism*. It shows that the mechanistic laws of interpretation of human society are inadequate and irrelevant. Marx observes that social ideas arise out of the conditions of material life in society. The mode of production consisting of production relations and forces of production constitutes the basis of the whole social development. Forces of production are instruments of production and, relations of production include social relations between man and man and also between man and means of production. In a capitalist system of production, there would be capital-owning class and the working class which does not own any capital. The different material interests of the classes divide them and lead to their struggle. The history of every society is then the history of class

struggles. The ultimate success or failure of a class is determined by its relation to the productive forces. That class wins in the struggle which owns the means of production because it is economically better off. It has also better bargaining power.

Historical materialism views class struggle as both inevitable and necessary to force the productivity of the direct producers beyond the subsistence level. Historically, every society is to pass through five different stages and their modes of production. These five stages are: primitive communism, slave-owning society, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism. However, historical materialism permits some countries to lag behind or to skip some stages, but their course would be conditioned by economic evolution and productive forces. In course of time, one system is negated by the other system. The change from one system to the other is due to the conflict between the new forces of production and the existing production relations. According to Engels, "the materialist conception of society seeks the ultimate cause and the great moving power of all important historical events in the economic development of society, in the changes in the mode of production and exchange in the consequent division of society into classes and the struggle between these classes." But man himself is the agent of material production. Man makes his own history. He does not make it out of conditions chosen by himself but out of such as he finds close at hand. Man can be an active agent of the desired change in history.

Gandhi does not believe in the Marxian dictum that the history of every society is the history of class struggle. He never recognised the class basis of social development and also did not subscribe to the Marxian view that social ideas arise out of the material conditions of life in the society. In the long run, Gandhi pointed out that victory *ipso facto* does not come to the class having the means of production but to the class whose struggles are right and just, and based on truth and *ahimsa* (nonviolence). Implicit in Gandhi's thoughts is the idea that the development of human consciousness in the right direction will change the course of history from one system to a morally and ethically better system through social reforms and organisational restructuring. Man has to make his own history, and when men are motivated to have a better way of life based on equality, non-exploitation, justice, and dignity, such a type of society can be established by human beings, and this does not necessarily need materialism as the guiding principle. On the contrary, at the higher echelon of human society, there would be more aspiration for mental peace, tranquillity, spiritualism, and limited material desires (for the basic necessities of life).

However, many critics have laboured under misconception by considering the Gandhian system as a system of poverty culture. The concept of *poverty culture* needs some elaboration as it is used differently by different social scientists. The British rulers in Gandhi's India had the misconception that the Indian people were inferior to the British (white)

people both genetically and also in terms of acquired qualities through education, culture, civilisation, and the like. And, therefore, they thought that the Indian people deserved the culture of poverty, and that they were not fit for enjoying the same notion of equality and freedom as their British counterparts in India. This was one of the reasons of suppression of all types of movements for freedom and equality in India. The British government thought that the Indians were ill-prepared to enjoy freedom and rights, and they needed a system of benevolent dictatorship because of their culture of poverty. The implicit presumption was that the white race had produced the highest standard of world civilisation as compared to the primitive civilisation of the Indian people who were semi-barbarous and plebian in many respects. Thus the British rulers did not find any possibility of cultural integration with India and the Indians. Hence cultural dualism exacerbated in Gandhi's India, and this resulted in exploitation, oppression, and inequalities of all types and dimensions. Gandhi fought persistently against this false doctrine of the culture of poverty among the Indians.

Another explanation of the thesis of the culture of poverty provides that the age-old poverty among the Indians during Gandhi's time became a sort of socio-economic culture and a way of life that was not only tolerated but was also perpetuated generations after generations in India. Critics pointed out that Gandhi's philosophy of plain living and high thinking with limited wants and aspirations would sustain rather than abolish the culture of poverty. This is, however, not the true appreciation of the objectives of the GPE. Gandhi wanted to abolish poverty, unemployment, economic serfdom, exploitation, and inequalities from India. He never entertained the culture of poverty and devised many working plans to eradicate it. A deep understanding of Gandhi's philosophy will reveal that he advised the restriction of meta-demands which are often called the *regrettable necessities*. The goods are often unnecessary in the sense that they neither increase efficiency nor productivity. They are more often than not harmful than helpful. He was in favour of all those basic needs of life which are consistent with good life and ethics-based human development.

In the GPE, there are two stages of achievement of the final goal of human development. The first stage is marked by the attainment of political independence (*swaraj*). This serves two immediate objectives. First, the achievement of political freedom and rights for everybody and, second, the economic self-sufficiency (the basic needs) through the regeneration of village and cottage industries which can ensure critical minimum level of income for every family. At the first phase of development, *swaraj* will, therefore, ensure both political independence as also economic security and independence. The second stage of social development is a higher stage marked by a better quality of life and equal opportunities for the development of all (*sarvodaya*). The attainment of these two stages needs distinctly different methodological strategies. Whereas the first stage

requires more of bottom-up type of planning, decentralisation, and reorganisation at the village level, the second stage necessitates ideological transformation of the society in terms of reforms based on equality, justice, and non-exploitation. Once the methodological boundary is demarcated by truth, religiosity, ethics, and morality coupled with nonviolence, it becomes easy to comprehend the Gandhian concept of man both as a consumer and as a producer (including labourer).

The Gandhian concept of man is a centre-piece in the whole mosaic of the GPE. Human development on a particular specified line is very crucial for the success of the Gandhian plan for the development of families, communities (society), and state. A man of Gandhian ideology has to rise above the mean selfish materialism and greed in all spheres of personal and social activities including agricultural and industrial development.

Arguably, socio-economic development will have its impact on the development of human beings by ensuring the flow of necessary resources for the desired level of empowerment and entitlement. The type and level of human development will have in turn its impact on the quality of agrarian and industrial development. The fact that human development and education can play a significant role in the transformation of traditional agriculture has already been emphasised by many scholars, predominantly by Theodore W. Schultz.² However, the GPE is concerned with the development of a special type of human beings.

Agricultural development and industrial progress interact with each other in many ways. This is both theoretically conceivable and an empirically observable fact; for, the developments of these sectors are basically interdependent. However, in terms of contextuality and appropriateness, the industrial sector in the GPE does not consist of large-scale mechanised and capital-intensive technology. The industrial as well as the agricultural sectors are manned by a special brand of human beings imbued with the ideology of truth, nonviolence, and non-selfishness. The cooperative efforts of these human beings, along with the desired type of agricultural and industrial development, will ultimately lead to the achievement of the desideratum of the ideal village/community which is self-sufficient and non-dependent on the outside world. Dependency, in a sense, is an increasing function of desire: higher level of desire leads to higher level of dependency. The GPE, therefore, advocates limited desire and demand. The control of meta-needs and contentment with the basic necessities of life is the quintessential building-block of the GPE. Thus the GPE can be said to be based on what John W. Mellor called a low aspiration model of development.³

In the Gandhian system of political economy, it is the quality of life and development that matters more than the rate of growth in quantitative terms. This truth is being appreciated by many of the developing countries of our times, particularly, the newly industrialising economics, that a very high rate of growth is not necessarily the optimum rate of growth. A very

high rate of economic growth may not sometimes be quite compatible with the social optimum. The economy may be over-heating and there may be strain on the mobilisation and use of factors of production. Growth is generally accompanied by increased social mobility. But what about adjustments to the new and rapidly changing environment? The socially and emotionally unresolved contradiction between self and the rapidly changing disembedded external world may give rise to a sense of negative individualism among the participants. Economic growth is but one aspect of the growth of society, and must be judged by the human relations that it promotes, and to strike an optimum balance, perhaps democracy with its ideals and liberalism can prove to be better than a regimented system of development planning. Gandhi emphasised much on the freedom and free choice of individuals for their fullest capability expansion. As a matter of fact, development is a type of freedom.⁴ As adumbrated earlier in this chapter, Gandhi wanted to ensure justice to all people with the attainment of *swaraj* (independence) which is the first level of his desired socio-political national organisation and also at the second level which is named as *Ram Rajya* (the ideal polity). In his context, it is necessary to appreciate the Gandhian concept of justice vis-à-vis the other prevailing theories.

Theories of Justice: A Review

It is the primary duty of the government to ensure that justice is done to all types of people regardless of caste, colour, and creed. The principles of justice are the principles of fairness. Justice is also regarded as a method or system of ensuring equality to all who are equals. For unequals, the principles of fairness become the guiding principles of justice. In public sector economics which basically deals with public choice and collective decision-making process, the issue of justice becomes extremely important; for, such public decisions may make some people worse off and some people better off. Therefore, the principle of fairness assumes a special role.

Justice may be *commutative* and/or *distributive*. In the case of commutative justice, the fairness of exchange relations between the two or more parties involved is the main consideration. Thus it is said that the remuneration to a factor of production must be equal to its marginal productivity. In such a case, there is no exploitation and justice is done to the factor of production. It is in this sense that the neoclassical theory of distribution can be said to be just. For purpose of public choice, social welfare, and reforms, what becomes more important is the concept of *distributive justice* which means the application of the principles of fairness in the distribution of income and wealth in a society. However, the *concept of fairness* is often unfairly complicated and admits of various subjective interpretations. We have a number of theories of distributive justice some of which will be elaborated here.

Utilitarianism is a teleological theory regarding what we ought to do. It is a normative ethical principle of judging the rightness or wrongness of

human action. According to this theory, social welfare is the sum of well-being of all individuals. The motto: "the greatest good of the greatest number" was first voiced by Francis Hutchinson. Utilitarianism developed between late eighteenth century and last quarter of the nineteenth century. The main proponent of this philosophy was Jeremy Bentham who is regarded as the father of utilitarianism. The other prominent members are David Hume, J.S. Mill, Henry Sidgwick, and Francis Hutchinson. Bentham introduced the doctrine in the analysis of social actions and policy. In the Greek period, utilitarianism was regarded as a form of hedonism (Epicureanism). The following are the major variations of the meaning of utilitarianism:

- ★ Greatest good of the greatest number
- ★ Maximisation of pleasure
- ★ Minimization of pain
- ★ Maximisation of happiness
- ★ Satisfaction of desire

What human beings ought to do? The answer can be teleological or deontological. Deontological theory says that one's duty is above everything. Teleological theory points out that in the ultimate analysis, we should do only those things which can bring greatest happiness to the greatest number of people. Modern utilitarianism is of two types: (i) *Act utilitarianism*. This was proposed by J.C. Smart. It judges the consequences of human actions. (ii) *Rule utilitarianism*. It considers the utility of rules or laws, and is therefore, more concerned with policy formulation. Utilitarianism states that man's worldly happiness is the only good or main consideration for everything. This is a normative-positive test of all policies, actions, and institutions.

One can find the traces of utilitarianism in the writings of scholastic writers of the medieval period. For instance, St. Thomas Aquinas was in favour of just price (*justum pretium*). Similarly, the concept of property was also analysed in terms of social benefits. The presence of normative and positive utilitarianism can be found in the writings of David Hume and Adam Smith. As a matter of fact, policy prescriptions of the classical writers exude utilitarianism. In this connection, one can think of corn laws, factory regulations, poor laws, tariffs and so on. The classical concept of human nature is Benthamite in essence which states that although human beings are selfish by nature, the selfishness teleologically brings some social benefits. This is also the essence of Smith's theory of naturalism and optimism.

The neoclassical-marginalist school extensively used the concept of utilitarianism since its inception in the 1870s. Neoclassical writers, that is, V. Pareto, L. Walras, W.S. Jevons, F.Y. Edgeworth, A Marshall and

P.H. Wicksteed were all utilitarians. The neoclassical school was really based on the concept of utility maximisation principle (the economic man). The neoclassical economists used the concepts of diminishing marginal utility and of interpersonal comparisons of utility to demonstrate that overall utility will be increased if there is a transfer of income and wealth from the richer section of the people to the poorer section. The richer section will lose some utility in that case but the gain of utility received by the poor people will be more overwhelming. This is one of the reasons why they preferred a system of equal distribution of income.

The whole welfare economics, especially of Pigou, and Pareto, starts with the concept of welfare which is tantamount to utility. In fact, Pareto lays down the condition that an optimal situation is that situation where the general utility (welfare) has increased without jeopardising the utility of anybody (Pareto optimality). The notion of neoclassical economists (Kaldor, Hicks, Bergson, and others) is based on the idea of welfare gains/losses, which are really utilitarianism in essence. In our times, J.C. Harsanyi, among others, advocates the maximisation of average utility (preference). He prefers a social utility function without envy, jealousy, and so on. He favours the policy or action which safeguards against our being worse off. He recommends social cooperation and rules utility and emphasises the need for moral principle in human action.

In spite of its many conceptual limitations, the movement of utilitarianism has been instrumental in saving the conditions of common people. The philosophy of utilitarianism stood for the aspirations of the middle class. It has been the basis of many reformative movements in the fields of legislation, politics, and socio-economic institutional changes around the world.

The Marxian theory of justice is system-related and class-related in many ways. Karl Marx did never explicitly write on the concept of justice. But his analysis of capitalist development is fraught with the notion of injustice and exploitation. To Marx, in a capitalist system of production relations, the capitalist owns or inherits the means of production. And on the basis of the superior bargaining power, he exploits the labouring class by paying it less than its productivity. The exploitation is equal to the extent of *surplus value* which is the difference between the total productivity of labour and the wage paid to labour. The exploitation tantamounts to injustice to the working class. Justice demands that the wage level should be equal to the needs which ensure a fair standard of living to the workers and their families to reproduce the commodity labour power. But the capital system does not guarantee the need-based wage. It does not pay the right wage to the workers: it pays much less than the value of the productivity of labour.

Marx was of the view that only the establishment of communism could guarantee the need-based wage payments to the workers. Thus communism to Marx is a just economic system. The capitalist system cannot be reformed

to bring justice to the labouring class because under capitalism, all institutions including the legal system and the state are pro-capitalist instruments. Justice requires that the wage system should be need-based. However, the question of the measurement of needs will depend on the stage of economic development and also on the level of human development that is aimed at. The needs should include not only the individual needs but also the social needs of human beings. In spite of debates over the issue of needs, it has been accepted by almost all that the needs must take into account the fair standard of living of the working class.

John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) has been regarded as a landmark in the area of distributive justice which provides an alternative to the theory of utilitarianism. Rawls complains that political theory in the past was sandwiched between two dominant ideas: on the one hand, there was the theory of utilitarianism and on the other, the philosophy of intuitionism. Rawls is not happy with either of these doctrines, and therefore, attempts to find a comprehensive political theory which can rationally explain the structures of intuition and can also explain satisfactorily the principles that should govern distributive justice. According to Rawls, social welfare is the welfare of the worst off members of a society. Rawls's theory tries to answer two basic questions of distributive justice: (i) how shall we find the principles of justice?, and (ii) what are these principles of justice?

The answer to the first question is that it is necessary to have contract under the veil of ignorance. While answering the second question, Rawls rejects the importance of merit because merit comes from heritage, upbringing and many other natural endowments (natural lottery) which are irrelevant from moral point of view. All primary goods like liberty, opportunity, and so on are to be distributed equally unless an unequal distribution is to the advantage of the least favoured. The *difference principle* states that differences are allowed so long as they gain the least advantaged. In Rawls's theory, no one deserves to benefit from their talent; but it is not unfair to allow such benefits when they work to the advantage of those who were less fortunate in the *natural lottery*. This is precisely the essence of Rawls' principle. Under the principle, people only have a claim to a larger share of resources if they can show that it benefits those who have lesser shares.

According to Rawls, justice can be achieved on the basis of a hypothetical social contract characterised by a situation so as to lead to a certain conception of justice. The point of contract is to determine principles of justice from the position of equality. The social contract is a device for embodying a certain conception of equality. John Rawls is interested in commutative justice, justice with equal start and equal opportunity and fairness to everyone.

Given the position of contractarian equality among the members making the hypothetical contract, justice would constitute a significant part of rational choice. Rawls advises to choose a situation or strategy wherein the

worst situation, the pay-off, would be the largest among the smallest (maximin), that is, maximise the gain in the worst off situation. However, for unknown and uncertain situations, Rawls suggests that people in the original position should choose the difference principle.

People's claim to social goods should not depend on natural endowments. Under a difference principle, people only receive extra reward for their talents if that leads to the benefit of the less well-off. Rawls defends the difference principle by saying that it counteracts the inequalities of natural and social disadvantages. In his theory of justice as fairness, in the original position, individuals are supposed to think instrumentally about justice in terms of the rules which should govern their self-interest without recognising their talents, endowments, social position, and so on. The principles of justice are chosen behind the veil of ignorance.

Rawls presumes that under conditions of the original position, rational individuals would agree to two rather different principles: (i) first requires equality in the assignment of basic rights and duties, and (ii) second holds that socio-economic inequalities are permitted only if these result in compensating benefits to everyone.

Rawls' theory of justice makes use of a distinctive restatement and application of social contract and rational choice theories. Rawls' theory states that the principles of justice are really the choice of rational people under a hypothetical situation of equalised liberty. And under such a situation, justice can be regarded as the outcome of fair agreement or bargain.

The parties making contract or agreement for justice as fairness in the initial situation must be rational and mutually disinterested. John Rawls interprets rationality in its narrow sense as the most effective means to give ends. The basic merit of the contract terminology, Rawls states, is that it conveys the idea that principles of justice may be conceived as principles to be chosen by rational persons. Rawls argues that his principles of justice are superior because of two reasons, namely (i) they spell out in a better way the idea of fairness and (ii) they are the outcome of a hypothetical social contract.

The most important proponent of libertarian thinking is Robert Nozick. According to him, the transfer of income or wealth from the rich to the poor is unjust for many reasons. Nozick is an anti-consequentialist. This means that it is not the outcome of any action which is important but more important is the process. According to Nozick, only those processes are just where exchange is voluntary. He is of the view that there are many instances of injustice in the past, therefore, it is the duty of the state to find out some mechanism through which the wrong doings of the past can be undone. However, this is a very complicated task for the government and the society. Be that, as it may, the libertarian view which says that the entitlement theory of justice should regard the economic outcomes as just only when they arise from acquisition of what was unearned or what was

voluntarily transferred. Just acquisitions in a sense are those which do not disturb individual rights and freedom. The distribution of income, therefore, must remedy the previous violations of rights or freedom. Nozick's theory relies heavily on the concept of rights and freedom in the matter of property rights and ownership. The present property rights are mostly found to be unjust. Therefore the attempt to redistribute property is also unjust. The concept, of freedom developed by the libertarian thinkers is a negative concept in the sense that it upholds non-interference with anybody's freedom and rights. The idea of Nozick has given rise to many types of debates about the concept of equity. It is indeed difficult to know what is right and what is wrong.

Justice is one of the most used words in the *Quar'an* and it has been used there more than one thousand times.⁵ According to the Islamic system, it is the responsibility of man on this earth to establish justice. Allah commands justice and welfare to mankind. The fundamental principle that guided the social formation of Medina was the equality of men. The most honoured person in Islam is the one who is the most righteous. Justice is equated with what is socially good for all. The Islamic concept of justice in the distribution of income and wealth does not require equal reward for everyone irrespective of his contribution to society. Islam tolerates some inequalities and allows differential earnings. Implicitly, the desirable pattern of income distribution is based on the principle of equity. The quality determines the quantity. For instance, a person having two wives need not buy the same length of clothes for each wife; for, one may be shorter or slimmer than the other. Islam advocates the provision of honourable living for those unfortunates in the society who are unable to participate in the productive activities. It supports the programme of basic needs (*ma-ash*) for every family.

Social justice constitutes freedom, but with some constraints, as dictated by religious prescriptions. Social justice guarantees individual freedom against the misuse of power.⁶ The starting-point of social justice is the equality of all human beings before the law. Social justice needs that the poor should be levelled up and the rich should be levelled down. Islam prohibits the concentration of wealth and power in a few hands. The possessor of wealth in Islam is merely a trustee, and he should spend the wealth in such a way as will maximise social welfare. There is a built-in institutional mechanism for the desirable pattern of redistribution of income through *zakat* (compulsory contribution for the benefit of the have-nots). There is also the provision of *sadaqah* (occasional offerings of alms to the needy). The Islamic concept of justice is aimed at minimising social inequalities through religious prescriptions. As a matter of fact, a true belief in Allah automatically entails devotion to justice and righteousness.

The *consequentialist philosophy* envisages that a just action is that which is based on the possible consequences of the action, policy, or choice. Thus it is the outcome of the action which is important for the evaluation of any

public policy or choice. In a sense, utilitarian theory of justice is based on *consequentialism*. Under this system, anything is justifiable whose consequence is good from the point of social welfare. If the consequences are bad, the action cannot be considered as just.

The *deontic philosophy* is associated with the name of Immanuel Kant. According to this philosophy, an action is just if it is done as a duty. These duties or rules may be the rules of natural justice, moral principles, codified rules or what may be called *categorical imperatives*. The idea is similar to rule utilitarianism which says that social welfare or utility can be maximised by adhering to codified rules or laws. However, all the theories discussed earlier are designed in a normative framework. It is necessary to integrate these theories of distributive justice to make them amenable to and a part of the mainstream economic theory which is still now dominated by the idea of Pareto optimality.

The Gandhian Concept of Justice

In Gandhi's conceptualisation, justice constitutes natural universal justice and is based on rights. To him, justice is an unconditional claim to certain universal, natural, inherent, and inalienable rights. The rights, however, depend on duties. Duties are preconditions of rights which are to be earned through the proper performance of duties. Being influenced by the theory of *karma* (action), as enshrined in Hindu religious scriptures, especially the *Gita*, Gandhi placed much more signification to *karma* without any attachment and expectation of rewards. Gandhi's concept of justice is the entitlement of certain rights which have been earned through duties. Justice empowers a person to enjoy certain natural rights, such as, equality of social status, equal social and economic opportunities, equal enjoyment of freedom and so forth. His theory of equality is based on his faith in the dignity of individuals of all classes and creeds. He had a deep concern for social and economic justice which was closely connected to his basic philosophy of nonviolence. To Gandhi, justice is a prerequisite for nonviolence.⁷ These two Gandhian concepts are so interconnected together that none of these could be understood without studying its relation with the other. It needs the Hegelian concept of understanding. One of the most important contributions of Hegel was his theory of relations which stated that nothing can really be understood in the true sense of the term without knowing its relations with others. The same philosophy applies in the case of the Gandhian concepts of nonviolence and justice.

Gandhi's concept of justice is a combination of two important philosophical theories—the Kantian deontic philosophy and the philosophy of consequentialism. While to Gandhi, to do one's assigned duty is a way to earn rights, he never became uncritical about the nature of duties. He would himself perform and want others to do all those duties which are ethically and morally compatible. Only those duties which are just and sanctioned by the natural laws and are consistent with the religious practices

are needed to be performed. These then are the categorical imperatives for him. The duties assigned by the higher authority or by the state can very well be violated if these are immoral, unjust, and repugnant to religiosity of men. Thus Gandhi was not an uncompromising follower of deontic philosophy. He was a discriminating consequentialist in the sense that he would like us to do only those works whose consequences are ethically salutary, morally upright, and practically just. He was not prepared to do any work which was not good for himself, for the society, for the nation, and for mankind.

Gandhian theory of justice, if one calls it a theory, was an amalgam of all the theories that have been elaborated earlier. His concept of justice was more and less than the utilitarian theory. To him, a just law or action is that which not only maximises the welfare of the greatest number of people but of all the people. He was not prepared to accept that such actions were not possible in actual practice. He was less than an utilitarian because he did support the idea of an individual behaviour which is based on the principle of utility maximisation. He supported the Marxian theory of justice in the sense that it was based on the need for the absence of exploitation of the poor working class by the rich capitalist class. Like Marx, he also believed that justice lies in the payment of need-based wages to the working population. Gandhi was a Rawlsian in the sense that he was interested in commutative justice—justice with equal start, equal opportunities, and equal fairness to all classes of people. Like Rawls, Gandhi also had a soft corner for the poor and down-trodden for whom he favoured a little bit of inequality and human kindness in the matter of distribution. Gandhi's concept of justice is more and less than the libertarian view. He did not agree with the libertarian view that the transfer of income and wealth from the rich to the poor is unjust. In fact, on many occasions, Gandhi himself recommended such transfers. However, he agreed with Nozick's suggestion that it is the duty of the state to find out some mechanism to undo the wrongs done in the past. The implications of the Gandhian theory of justice also uphold the libertarian view that just acquisitions must not disturb the rights and freedom of individuals. Like the Islamic theory of justice, Gandhi's concept of justice recognises the equality of all human beings and wants the possessor of wealth to be the trustee of the wealth for the benefit of all. Gandhi also favoured the policy of levelling up the poor and levelling down the rich for the sake of socio-economic equality.

Why Call it Gandhian Political Economy?

The Gandhian system of thought as adumbrated earlier can be looked upon as a system of political economy for various reasons, some of which can be explained in the present section.

As depicted earlier, the Gandhian system is an interactive system in many ways between the economy and the polity, between the society and

the economy, and between the polity and society in a very broad way. The GPE can be classified as a social political economy; for, it studies social relations involving labour, capital, community and so on. In the analysis of the social political economy, the GPE studies the institutional factors both in terms of causes and effects and argues for the establishment of ideal institutions of family and community based on self-sufficiency, cooperation, nonviolence and the like.

The GPE also analyses the possibilities of social conflicts and recommends methods to resolve such conflicts through the principles of equality, sacrifice, and dematerialisation (*anasakti*). The principle of dematerialisation is indeed a very powerful element in the GPE. It would not be wrong to call the GPE a type of political economy of dematerialisation. In the study of distributive shares, Gandhi has strongly recommended the principle of equality: equal pay for equal work and non-discrimination based on caste, colour, creed, and gender. In the matter of fair redistribution of income and wealth, the institution of trusteeship plays a very significant role. As a matter of fact, the GPE is replete with the idea of involvement, activation, and reformation of social institutions. It is in this sense that one can meaningfully categorise the Gandhian political economy as an example of institutional political economy.

Thus the GPE works at many analytical planes. It incorporates elements of institutional political economy, social political economy, and, above all, a systemic political economy. It is a systemic study of interactions among various sectors and institutions through which it has shown the possibility of establishment of idealised villages and communities at the lower level, and nations at the upper level of the social structuration. The GPE can, thus, be regarded as the study of an idealised system of society which is socialistic in nature. Gandhian socialist political economy is sometimes referred to as equivalent to Marxian political economy minus the elements of violence. How-be-it, in teleological sense, the GPE turns out to be an idealised holistic system par excellence. It explains from positivist stand point not only how things are but also the normative standard of how things should be. In its normative conceptualisation, the GPE is closely related to the nomological axioms of the Islamic political economy.⁸

Like the Islamic political economy, the GPE considers the absolute divine epistemology as the starting-point of the whole schema. The application of truth, morality, justice, and natural rights is the starting universal axiomatic premise in both the Islamic political economy and the Gandhian political economy, from which all the deductive-inductive nomological inferences can be drawn. Furthermore, both these types of political economy are concerned with the study of a system of good life and living where the concept of goodness is derived from the element of divine dispensation. The GPE as a holistic system is essentially based not only on the unicity and universality of truth but also on its continuation and prevalence at every stage of operation. The endogeneity of the system is,

however, based on democracy, equality, self-sacrifice, nonviolence, truth, and peace.

It should be noted that there are many conventional areas of study in the analysis of political economy, irrespective of its schools of thoughts. Broadly, these areas are:

- ★ Surplus generation/extraction
- ★ Exploitation and dependency
- ★ Inequality and class conflicts
- ★ Policy analysis
- ★ Role of state

A detailed discussion of the GPE should incorporate the analysis of all these classic elements in their proper perspective. In the GPE, an ethico-economic transformation of consumption, production, and distribution is used to explain the systemic nature of ethics, truth, and nonviolence in the total interactive process. It determines the necessary correlates of concomitant superstructure including the ontology of state, distributive relations, and class relations. The GPE threadbares the laws of motion of social development consistent with the ethical value system. In fact, the aim of GPE is indeed very comprehensive and humanistic as it is principally grounded on the substantive meaning of systemic ethics in a process-oriented world-view. Thus it is clear that the GPE contains all the essential elements of conventional political economy plus some new insights. Hence rationality suggests that the system of Gandhian thoughts in its holistic sense be interpreted as a new system of political economy which may be called the Gandhian political economy.

The Embedded System

The basic purpose of the GPE is the introduction and perpetuation of an embedded system where economic relations (particularly production relations) do not get special preference over the social relations like familistic and community relations. The elements and the problems of disembedded economy which were recognised by K. Polanyi (1944)⁹ were already discovered by M.K. Gandhi, although he did not use this special concept. The GPE is an attempt to establish the traditional relationship between economic and social life, which is thrown overboard by a capitalist system of organisation. According to Gandhi, the existence of market does not necessarily imply that every transaction has to be based on the strategy of profit or utility maximisation. Reciprocal transactions at the village/community level may be based on social and human relations. As a matter of fact, social and institutional relations in many ways condition economic activities. Thus human and social relations must be embedded in the economic system. Market considerations or sentiments should not

overpower social relations in an economy. In many respects, the views of Gandhi were in consonance with those of Karl Polanyi.

Like Polanyi, Gandhi had also the conviction that in capitalistic economics, reciprocity (that is, obligatory output-sharing) and redistribution are not embedded within the social relationship. In fact, if an economy is not embedded in social tradition, custom, moral culture, and ethical values, undesirable economic changes cannot be contained. Moreover, it happens generally that factor prices are administered and not market-determined. In such a situation, the integrative process between the economy and society becomes less perfect and unaccomplished.

The Gandhian concept of economy is a moral social economy which is embedded in the social system. The GPE wants to ensure that an economy is not totally organised on simply the relations of market exchange. Many non-market humanitarian considerations are indeed necessary to infuse stability into the social system. Gandhi's advocacy of social reforms can be seen to be based on the desire to sustain social continuity and stability in the face of macro-economic vulnerability associated with the painful adjustment process through which the market economies pursue the objectives of efficient allocation of resources. The embedded system that the GPE desires to establish is meant to provide the necessary in-built stability against social and political business cycles. Indeed, the regeneration of self-contained communities with the economic system in it would be able to solve a host of social problems that the present world is confronted with.

Gandhi was the personification of Indian tradition, moral values, and religious culture. But in many ways, he tried to change some of the old values and traditions to make them modern. One such example is the change in the education system in India. He was also in favour of abolishing many of the evil social practices, such as untouchability. He wanted the abolition of Asiatic society and lay down the foundation of modern society. Gandhi combined the modern institution of democracy with the moral and spiritual tradition of politics. He wished to study Eastern institutions in the spirit of modern scientific enquiry. His approach to life, society, and politics was a fusion between the oriental tradition and the modern thoughts of his time popularised by Ruskin, Thoreau, Tolstoy, and others. His works and approach are an amalgam of Indian classical tradition and the Western scientific paradigm and liberalism.

Notes and References

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Gandhi's Campaign Against Untouchability 1933-1934

(AN ACCOUNT FROM THE RAJ'S SECRET OFFICIAL REPORTS)

Edited and with an Introductory Essay by

Baren Ray

Gandhi's year-long campaign against untouchability (1933-34) was not only perhaps the most intensely and passionately carried out of all his campaigns, but one which also provided the occasion for Gandhi to work out his wider economic and constructive programmes.

Apart from recording Gandhi's critique as well as his praxis against what was the most decadent and exploitative in the traditional Indian social reality, these accounts from the Raj's own secret official reports provide irrefutable evidence of Gandhi's heroic struggle.

The failure of the radical-modernist sections within the national movement to recognize Gandhi's Herculean efforts to add a socio-economic dimension to the country's political battle was indeed tragic.

These very detailed official reports are published here for the first time and should be of immense value to all those interested in the history of the national movement and in Gandhian studies.

The Introductory Essay provides a critical assessment of Gandhi and his contemporaries in the context of the struggle against untouchability and for what would be understood today as the basic human rights of the Indian people, which was the need of the hour for which Gandhi battled so unrelentingly but met with such insufficient response. The Essay traces the crystallization of Gandhi's ideas over this period moving towards his concept of people's power and self-help for development.

Baren Ray has been an old political activist from his student days in the early 1940s. He has been to prison both before and shortly after Independence for his political work. He was active in the Indian and international Peace and Solidarity movements for many years since the inception of these movements. He represented India at the Permanent Secretariat of the Afro-Asian People's Solidarity Organization (headquartered in Cairo) twice. Since 1981, he has been devoting himself entirely to research and has been a Fellow of the Indian Council of Historical Research for 1988-90 and 1992-93.

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Gandhi's *Maun*: Springs of Strength

Rashmi-Sudha Puri

MUCH MALIGNED AND misunderstood in his own time, but praised and virtually deified after death, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi was endowed with rare inner strength and enviable courage of conviction. Since his death particularly, the world has been paying fulsome homage in high-sounding phrases and sparkling sentiments, though some perceptive minds saw his greatness in his very lifetime. Thus the celebrated British classicist, Professor Gilbert Murray, wrote in 1918 about Gandhi:

Persons in power should be very careful how they deal with a man who cares nothing for sensual pleasure, nothing for riches, nothing for comfort or praise or promotion, but is determined to do what he believes to be right. He is a dangerous and uncomfortable enemy because his body, which you can always conquer, gives you so little purchase upon his soul.¹

The unconquerable soul, the Mahatma—how much he disdained the title—was the outcome of unceasing, rigorous endeavour of severest self-discipline to which he subjected himself by making disciplinary resolutions and totally voluntary commitment to vows he took throughout his life that paved the pathway to self-reform. “One who is not ready for small reforms,” he believed:

would never be ready for great reforms. He who makes the best of his faculties will go on augmenting them and will find that what once seemed to him a great reform was really small one. He who orders his life in this way leads a truly natural life.²

This belief led him to lay down certain vows for the *ashram* inmates and *Satyagrahis*.

True to his creed that one must practise first and then preach, Gandhi himself took certain vows to “reform a single person, that was his own self.” Indeed, commitment to vows began early in his life, when he was just

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18 years old. At the time of his departure for England to study law, his mother, Putlibai, having serious misgivings about what lay across the seas and apprehensive that her son may not fall a prey to those evils, ensured that her adolescent son Mohan did not succumb to those things that Indian men did when abroad, *viz.*, taking to women, wine, and meat. Becharji Swami, a Jain monk and trusted friend of the family, was summoned to administer an oath vowing Gandhi not to commit the said three indulgences; Gandhi lived this promise to the mother till his death.³ The commitment to mother might be seen as made out of respect, love, or fear. The taking of vows of his own volition to discipline himself came about somewhat later.

The first occasion was in early July 1906, during the Zulu rebellion in South Africa, when marching in the hills of Natal, Gandhi took the vow of life-long chastity. He narrates in his autobiography:

During the difficult marches that had then to be performed, the idea flashed upon me that if I wanted to devote myself to the service of the community in this manner I must relinquish the desire for children . . . live the life of one retired from household cares. . . . After full discussion and mature deliberation I took the vow in 1906.⁴

Apparently, his urge to devote himself to public service required a measure of self-discipline, self-control. And as his involvement in public life grew, the quest for self-control became embellished with vows occasioned by events and occurrences.

The Solemnity and Sanctity of a Vow

Gandhi ardently believed in the sacredness of the vows, so much so that even the slightest deviation or violation of which he believed to be nothing short of a sin, let alone taking their observance lightly. This was instilled in him from the very beginning. On his return from England after being called to the Bar, he met Raichand—a poet by inclination, Jain by religion, and a jeweller by profession—who was to cast an enduring influence on Gandhi. Jainism lays heavy, and serious, stress on vows. One who professes this faith must observe five minor vows called the *Anuvratas*, three *Gunavratas*, and four *Shikshavratas*. The essence of these vows enjoins one to limit the necessities of life, and avoid such food that entails killing of creatures.

Gandhi used the English equivalent *vow* to connote the Sanskrit word *Vrata* together with *Yama*, the two meaning a solemn resolve and a self-imposed restraint respectively. In its oldest meaning *Vrata* connotes divine will which establishes and preserves the order in the universe. In his letter of 31 October 1930 to J.C. Kumarappa, Gandhi explains what he understands and means by *vow*:

It is a promise made by one to oneself. We have to deal with two dwellers within: Rama and Ravana. . . . The one binds us to make us really free, the

other only appears to free us so as to bind us in his tight grip. A vow is a promise made to Rama to do or not to do a certain thing which if good we want to do but have not the strength unless we are tied down, and that is what a vow is meant for.⁵

Since humans are part of the divine, they through spiritual resolve and diligent performance of duty, can reflect cosmic order. Conscience is a potential force in human body but in many it remains asleep. "Conscience has to be awakened through the power of a vow." "An awakened conscience resides only in a delicately tuned breast."⁶ Self-radiating and self-validating that the awakened conscience immediately and simultaneously is, it is actually the *inner voice*,

the veracity of which can be confirmed only by subjecting self to *tapas* equipping the self at once with heroism and humility born out of fearlessness and following the path of duty. . . . Heroism is a quality of heart free of anger or fear.⁷

Heroism, thus generated, enabled Gandhi to stand alone in times of trial. By awakening the conscience through vows, Gandhi socialized the individual conscience rather than internalising it, since the emphasis was not on spiritual attainment but on collective welfare.

Gandhi discusses at length the importance and impact of vows in his life. "The importance of vows," says he, "grew upon me more clearly. . . ."

I realised that a vow far from closing door to real freedom, opened it. . . . By refusing to take a vow man is drawn to temptation. I believe in effort, I do not want to bind myself with vows which is the mentality of weakness and betrays a subtle desire for the thing to be avoided. . . .⁸

A life without vows, he came to believe, was "like a ship without anchor or like an edifice that is built on slip-sand instead of solid rock."⁹

As regards the necessity of a vow, Gandhi's argument was that "acts which are not possible by ordinary self-denial become possible with the aid of vows which require extraordinary self-denial. It is thus believed that vow can only uplift us."¹⁰ Ordinarily, vows are taken in respect of matters otherwise difficult to accomplish. By taking a vow to achieve something we draw a cordon around ourselves, and it is this inflexible determination which is called a vow.

This sentiment is actually reflected in his letter of 22 February 1927 addressed to Mira Behn when she was debating with herself as to whether she should take a vow or not. "Not to take a vow," he wrote,

is to trust one's little self. To take it is to distrust oneself and trust only God. I know where I should have been if I had not taken the vows I have.¹¹

In the same letter he mentions his differences on the issue with C.F.

Andrews who was not sure if the voice from within is always the voice of God; moreover, a vow deprived one of one's freedom, felt Andrews.

Gandhi noticed a fallacy in Andrews' argument, and tried to clarify it in his letter to Mira, by suggesting that a vow ultimately led to freedom. "If therefore you feel the call within to take a vow," he wrote to her, "and if you feel it makes you feel *freer*, you shall take it."¹²

Contrary to the common impression that a vow binds a person, limits his choice of action, Gandhi holds that vows allow you the freedom to strengthen your determination, cultivate higher values and imbibe virtues. Vows certainly check moral decline; for, a vow can be taken only for a noble cause and not for committing sin or do evil. With a character in Shakespeare, Gandhi too seems to argue:

It is a great sin to swear unto sin;
But it is a greater sin to keep a sinful oath.
Who can be bound by any solemn vow
To do a murderous deed, rob a man. [*Henry the Sixth*]¹³

The commitment hence can only be to doing good deeds; for, vows are sacred. Thus the individual resolves to achieve good and strives to do good and not wrong deeds. Gandhi found full support of this in a quotation by Tertullian cited in J. Brierly's *Ourselves and the Universe*, which he read in prison in December 1922: "To wish ill, to do ill, or to think ill of anyone, we are equally forbidden without exception."¹⁴

There is little doubt in Gandhi's mind that the various vows he observed gave him strength to free himself from hatred, falsehood, deceit, etc., and enabled him to stick to the path of truth, freedom, justice, duty, compassion and service. Accordingly, he could possibly not think that freedom is to be used to become evil. It is only for being good and doing well that you need freedom and to grow better from good the freedom is unlimited. Self-indulgence has to be abjured, restrained by a vow "as inviolable as nature's laws."¹⁵

The sanctity of a vow for Gandhi was absolute; for, a vow was taken after full consideration, mature deliberation and thus in utmost earnestness. "The ideal of truth," which he fanatically held to be supreme, "demands that a vow once taken should be fulfilled in the spirit as well as the letter," he maintained. Thus the vows taken by him were never, but never, broken, and he lived all his vows till the very last of his breath.¹⁶ "I should always have an eye to truth and nonviolence while writing, speaking, or doing anything," he proclaimed, "I can say I have been doing that ever since I gave my word to my mother."¹⁷

In his long life Gandhi took a fairly large number of vows. Besides the one given to his mother while leaving for England, the first he took on his own seems to be that of celibacy in July 1906, as mentioned above, The second—or third—was perhaps inspired by his "political *Guru*," as Gokhale was often described by him.

When Gandhi finally returned to India in 1915, Gokhale wanted him to get to know the country, its conditions, and its ground realities; so he extracted a promise from him that he, Gandhi, would not express himself on public issues for a year—it was to be a year of probation for Gandhi. Much of this year was thus spent by the latter in travelling extensively across the country, and eschewing politics completely by keeping quiet.¹⁸ His travel revealed to him the poverty, the abject conditions of his countrymen, the overwhelming mass of whom went barefoot. So, from the time he came to know of Gokhale's death he, identifying himself with the impoverished, barefoot masses of India, vowed to go barefoot himself for one whole year to mourn his *Guru*, and stuck to the vow at great personal discomfort and inconvenience till it had run its full course.¹⁹

On 7 and 8 April 1919 he drafted the text of two crucial vows for the "masses of men." The *Swadeshi* vow, and the vow to be taken for the communal unity of India.²⁰ About a year later, on 31 August 1920, he vowed to wear *Khadi* for life, and on 22 September of the next year at Madurai he took the vow to wear the loin cloth—"mourning costume,"²¹ as Robert Payne chooses to call it, for the remaining years of his life. A month or so later, on 31 October, Gandhi committed himself to spinning everyday and resolved to spin for half an hour everyday before the second meal, and vowed to forgo the meal in case he failed to do so.²² Finally, before starting the Salt March on 12 March 1930, Gandhi took the vow that he will not return to Sabarmati Ashram without having the unjust Salt Tax Act repealed. But that did not happen, though the Act was partially modified. The conclusion of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact brought an end to the Salt Satyagraha. But Gandhi did not go back to Sabarmati; instead he set up another Ashram at Wardha.

Perhaps the most profound and pragmatic of his vows, which is highly pertinent—if not desperately required in our present mad times—in our opinion, is his vow of *Maun*, or silence, which he observed every Monday beginning in mid-1921, referred to in the *Collected Works* as the "Day of Silence." Curiously, contrary to the specific dates given to his various vows, the exact date of commencement of his "Day of Silence" is not available. One is hard put to say when exactly did Gandhi announce his decision in this regard; all that he says in "it was in the twenties."²³ This is baffling; for, not only was Gandhi himself quite particular in writing down practically everything that had a public aspect, he had devoted secretaries—one of whom has been compared with Boswell—who devoutly noted down every move of their hero.

It would seem that Gandhi had started observing silence while he was still in South Africa. Prabhudas Gandhi mentions in his *My Childhood with Gandhiji*:

Gandhi mostly remained silent. He seldom talked to even Magan Lal whom Gandhi had given all responsibility of the children in the Phoenix Settlement. . . .

I do not remember that he [the Mahatma] even took a vow of silence while in Phoenix but those days he was silent even without a pledge.²⁴

At some place, Gandhi himself mentioned that silence was "natural to him," and told some of his friends, "I was silent at school and in my London days I was taken for a silent drone by friends."²⁵ Possibly this inner quietitude in time matured into a vow of silence he eventually took seriously and in all earnestness.

In his article published in the *Vegetarian*, Gandhi recounted the deep impact of the quiet and stillness he experienced on the visit in 1895 he happened to make to the Trappist monastery in Mariann Hill near Durban:

Completely overawed by the disciplined stillness [Gandhi found it to be a beautiful place]. . . . Most of the inmates were under a vow of silence. I enquired of Father the motive of it and he said that the motive was apparent. We are frail human beings. We do not know very often what we say. If we want to listen to the still, small voice that is always speaking within us, it will not be heard if we continually speak. I understood that precise lesson. I know the secret of silence.²⁶

Louis Fischer mentions that while staying at the Gandhi Ashram during one of his walks, he asked the Mahatma a pointed question in this regard:

In 1942 I inquired of Gandhi what lay behind his day of silence [to which Gandhi replied]: It happened when I was being torn to pieces. I was working very hard, travelling in hot trains, incessantly speaking at many meetings and being approached in trains and elsewhere by thousands of people who asked questions, made pleas, and wished to pray with me. I wanted to rest for one day a week. So it instituted the day of silence. Later of course I clothed it with all kinds of virtues and gave it a spiritual cloak. But the motivation was really nothing more than that I wanted to have a day off.²⁷

Sometimes, Gandhi would observe silence on days other than Mondays as well, sometimes for a few days, or a week, or even for over a month.²⁸ Before 14 September 1921, Gandhi had sent a telegram to Dr T.S.S. Rajan: "Arrange a short tour with three-hour silence daily."²⁹ Volume 21 of the *Collected Works* shows 5 September as "Silence Day," which also happens to be a Monday. In fact, the same volume records the Mahatma's day of Silence from Monday, the 22 August 1921 onwards;³⁰ prior to that the "Silence Day" finds no mention at all.

Significantly, silence as a concept, an idea, or a vow seems to have considerable importance and impact in the opinion of Gandhi's biographers and other commentators. Thus Louis Fischer titles chapter 28 of his work, *The Life of Mahatma Gandhi*, the "Silent Years;" so does Robert Payne in his biography of the Mahatma.

Gandhi undertook a hectic tour of the country from Karachi in the west to Dibrugarh in the east, and from Rawalpindi in the north to Tuticorin in

the south in the year 1921. It seems *most likely* that he took the vow of silence sometime in the course of this tour. The happenings in the year might well have induced this vow; for, there was so much to reflect upon the then occurrences, particularly the communal disturbances. The stand of the Moplah community of the West coast on *Khilafat* worried him, as did the riots in Bombay on 17 November [1921], the day the Prince of Wales landed in the city. He had asked the people to organise a total boycott of all functions held in the Prince's honour in one part of the city; he expressed satisfaction at the people's spirit of discipline and unity in accomplishing it. But in another part of the city rioting occurred when a mob started molesting those not joining the boycott. Gandhi felt deeply humiliated by this outburst of violence—perhaps more than he was by the disturbances of April 1919. His appeals for communal unity and harmony did not seem to have much effect. He was distressed to the point of undertaking an indefinite fast till peace and harmony were restored in the city. Though the fast lasted a few days, on 22 November [1921] it resulted in a life-long vow of “weekly fast on Monday, which was to be a silence day too;” though silence he had been observing even before making this announcement. The *Collected Works* (Volume 21) records 21 November 1921 as “Silence Day.”³¹

Silence, in the *Yogic* context, entails a state of *Samadhi*, where all movement of thought or body is absent; it is a condition of total stillness—a state not easy to attain, but is a prerequisite of a person wholly committed to social good. In a word, such a state and the endeavour for its attainment are shrouded in mysticism. In contrast, Gandhi's silence was not of this kind. Far from sitting in *Samadhi*, his day of silence was packed with full activity like that on any other day of the week, perhaps even more.

On his day of silence, Gandhi, besides his other commitments, did more writing and spinning than he ordinarily could. Indeed, he insisted on strenuous corporal labour as absolutely necessary on the day of silence to ward off indulgence in evil thoughts, for he held, “idle hands some mischief still will ever find to do” is never so applicable as in hours of silence. Evidently then, the vow of silence was coupled with work, since work, it was his conviction, enhances self-purification; clearly, there was no question of whiling away time by observing silence. Contemplation or idle calculation or speculation militates against and constitutes violation of the aim and vow of self-restraint. Gandhi felt that during the hours of silence he actually worked perhaps better, with complete detachment; for, it helped rid the mind of confusion, enabled thinking without malice, and work for the good of others. The mind remained calm, nothing disturbed it, whatever thoughts arose they “cross the mind like a flight of birds crossing the sky in windless air leaving no trace.” By observing silence, his work became easier and clearer: “I can be more introspective,” he claimed.

Gandhi, in silence, experienced complete peace when mind receives signals and commands of truth and remains fearless and undisturbed and detached from petty squabbles. He would cite the 18th verse from chapter

IV of the *Gita* in underscoring the efficacy of silence in enhancing the ability to be non-attached and "achieve enduring self-purification through work."³² He was sanguine that much could be done "if all took the vow of silence and gave themselves to solid work." For, work alone, not words, will make us achieve our goal; God is silent but working in all directions:

Who can rival the perfect silence of God and His work too? He needs no sleep. . . . Always silent. He is most active. Let us leave the government to its doing and babblings and go on doing our duty.³³

Gandhi was aware of human frailty, of course: "not everyone, however, can observe complete silence." Still, he wished that everyone observed silence for some time every day; if people who go to theatre observe complete silence there for three to four hours, why should it not be possible for them to do so elsewhere and otherwise? So, to cultivate the habit of silence is not beyond oneself; even children should be disciplined to observe silence, and they can do it. Gandhi had "all along believed that what is possible for one is possible for all . . . even for a child." Everyone can observe silence in a small measure, and "engage in spinning during these hours and be adding to the national produce."

Excepting observance of silence, the rhythm and activity on Monday was no different for Gandhi from those of the rest of the week. On that day too he would meet people, including press reporters, correspondents, national leaders, members of the Congress Working Committee, Constructive workers, foreign dignitaries, and common people. He would listen patiently, and occasionally write a few words in reply. This was not the best way of conducting conversation, but the weekly silence gave him the needed relief and some privacy. Even at the Second Round Table Conference [1931] in London, which he attended as the sole spokesman of the Indian National Congress, he was able to keep his vow. The Federal Structure Committee of the conference met at St. James Place on 14 September, which happened to be a Monday. Gandhi attended the meeting, but did not utter a word, thus keeping his vow.

Gandhi's "Philosophy" of Silence

Besides the various virtues and value that Gandhi attributed to observance of silence, he developed too a distinctive philosophical position in regard to silence, which, in fact, constitutes the *moral* and *ethical* dimensions of his thought and conduct, and thus merits consideration at some length.

Veracity in speech demands that the facts be ascertainable by valid evidence and proof. When the true nature of a thing or event has been correctly perceived by logical inference or reliable testimony and can be rendered and communicated in terms that do not misrepresent, mislead, or otherwise cause misapprehension, the speaker is obliged not to indulge in intentional deceit or half-truths. Utterances not directed towards establishing

individual or system's good, fall short of veracity. Gandhi constantly endeavoured to keep these considerations in view while speaking, as a result of which his thought and conduct acquired a moral and ethical substance.

The *Mahabharata* allows circumstances in the performance of *Rajdharma* where truth is falsehood and falsehood is truth, and the righteous person in such situations is advised to choose the latter. Thus a ruffian who is out for pillage and murder should not be told the truth, and if silence will make him suspicious it is better to put him on the wrong scent; telling him a lie should be preferred. Gandhi did not accept this; he could "bear being transfixed with spears, but could not bear being stabbed with the spear of lies." For, telling a lie or stating falsehood, for him, was deliberate violence. He held,

The man who commits such violence after knowing the truth, falls from truth, that a man who knows truth can be lecherous is as inconceivable as that darkness may exist despite the sun shining.³⁴

Under no circumstances would Gandhi allow or approve of a lie, falsehood, or deceit. The following two instances bear this out sharply.³⁵

The Collector of Champaran [1917] wrote Gandhi a very stiff letter, which he later decided to withdraw, and asked for its return. Some of the young companions of Gandhi quickly began to copy the letter in order to preserve it. Gandhi admonished them and said that if they kept a copy, the letter could not be said to have been returned. Similarly, at the time of the Gandhi-Irwin Pact [5 March 1931], the Home Secretary's insulting letter to Gandhi on second thoughts was withdrawn by the Government; there is no copy of it available in the Congress archives for the same reason that "to keep a copy of letter is to harbour untruth in your heart," records the Congress historian and Secretary of the time.

Gandhi's reasoning was that there should be absolute transparency: people should appear as they are and never let it be said of them, "they are not what they seem." Intrigue and hypocrisy had no place in his life or programme. Arising from this conviction was his incessant insistence upon unity of thought, word, and deed, which is so apparent in his own thought, action, speech, and writing.

Like Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), who held, "the greatest injury a man can inflict on his duty towards himself is a lie," so one should never tell a lie³⁶—Gandhi too believed that truth must be told at all costs. But where he differs with Kant is that he [Gandhi] does not insist on *speaking* the truth, nor would he allow a lie even "if it were to avert an evil." In such a situation, Gandhi would *remain silent*. One must of course not *tell* a lie, but one is not always *bound* to disclose the facts; instead, one should refuse to tell people what they want to know, particularly if he knows that the information given will be put to evil use. A votary of truth, felt Gandhi, is entitled to keep silent when morality and dignity demanded. So, many a

time, Gandhi would keep the truth close to his chest, particularly if he felt that people were going to put it to evil use. "A lie is a lie and to tell a lie," he would agree, "is a breach of *Satya*," but "which a brave silence (at a risk of injury to self) is not." According to him, to suffer injury by adhering to truth further strengthens the individual; for, it generates humility:

The seeker after truth should be humbler than dust. The world crushes the dust under its feet, but the seeker after truth should be so humble himself that even the dust could crush him. Only then and not until then will he have a glimpse of truth [about human nature or the sublime].³⁷

Gandhi would respect those who had the courage to tell the harsh truth than the one who took recourse to falsehood and lies. In the final analysis, he believed, lying results in self-torture and endless trouble. He was not blind to human shortcomings but he would never hold these against them.

An important aspect of silence is that it leaves others free to conjecture. Silence may often mislead, or be misunderstood. Take Buddha's silence about the existence of God, for instance; it was taken as his agnosticism. The *Jatakas* tell us that when asked by one of his disciples why was he silent on this, Buddha replied, "those who know they know even without my saying and those who do not know will not know by my words." The Buddha thus answered the curious with silence!

Gandhi, like Buddha, revealed only that much what he thought others should know and could comprehend. He would not waste words; for, he believed that the perfect whole never unfolds itself to ordinary minds. He spells out his ultimate objective in the introduction to his *An Autobiography*:

What I want to achieve what I have been striving to achieve these last thirty years is self-realization, to see God face to face, to attain *Moksha*. There are some things which are known only to oneself and one's maker. These are clearly incommunicable. The experiments I am about to relate are not such.³⁸

So he wrote down such events in his life which he thought could be comprehend by children as by adults keeping some of the thoughts and experiences to himself. Few things of his inner self he kept back, to himself alone, and would not share even with those he knew were in close sympathy with him generally. These undoubtedly shaped his thought and influenced his action, but he did not render these in words.

Answers to many questions may thus have to wait for ever. Man, says Gandhi, should strive for pursuit of truth, cultivation of understanding, practice of self-control and avoid verbal controversy so that evil passions do not multiply. Moreover, speech is not the only outlet, noble act; good conduct, manual labour, etc., are the many channels of expression. "Life has a higher purpose and larger scope when silence is behind it than when its motive force is a flux of words." Words alone cannot teach; words end where truth begins. The wise remain silent; it is the ignorant living in

darkness clouded with greed, prejudice, insecurity, self-interest, who in the noise of the drums of their own ego do not recognize truth. The message, therefore, maintains Gandhi, is: desire brings noise, fulfilment brings silence. In the purity of silence truth lives in calm and wordlessness than in noise and cackle of debates.

In this autobiography Gandhi clearly says that he had learnt by experience that silence is a part of the spiritual discipline of a votary of truth:

Proneness to exaggerate, to suppress or modify the truth, wittingly or unwittingly, is a natural weakness of man and silence is necessary in order to surmount it. A man of few words will rarely be thoughtless in his speech, he measures every word.³⁹

Thus silence is not a negative condition or experience. In fact, what one experiences in silence is more dispassionate and objective because the mind ceases to listen to noise of rumours and starts listening rather inwards, and discovers the unexpected, quite different from superficialities. Gandhi considered the observation, "silence is the true language of cosmic adoration," by Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes [of the United States Supreme Court] to be something of a tribute to the phenomenon, and perfectly apt.⁴⁰ Gandhi's was not the silence of sewn up lips:

That is no silence. One may achieve the same result by chopping off one's tongue. But that could not be silence. He is silent who having the capacity to speak utters no idle word.⁴¹

With a touch of exasperation Gandhi noted a common tendency to insensitive, possibly verbose and rhetorical talking, "We find," he pointed out,

so many people impatient to talk. There is no chairman of a meeting who is not pestered with for permission to speak and whenever the permission is given the speaker generally exceeds the time limit, asks for more time and sometimes keeps talking without permission.⁴²

No wonder, he was such an advocate of inculcating the habit of silence quite early from childhood. He firmly believed silence to be more creative, and conducive to imparting sincerity of purpose than any formulation of words could ever do.

In his own time, as indeed even today, Gandhi had his critics.⁴³ A critic of his campaign for *Charkha* and spinning caustically commented: "When Gandhi dies the spinning-wheels would serve to make his funeral pyre." The comment neither provoked nor detracted him from his life-long quest.⁴⁴

There does, indeed, seem to be a lesson in Gandhi's *Maun* for this mad world of ours today, predominantly characterised as it is by incessant din and noise submerging the voice of great silence, by the excruciating ceaseless

cacophony which causes and contributes to tension that threatens life itself. He worked, "in studied silence."⁴⁵ His own words—"his failures were public, his quests and triumphs private"—which he had once used for Tagore, apply to him so perfectly.

The *Maun*, undoubtedly enriched him intellectually, spiritually, while at the same time adding to and buttressing his inner strength. Gandhi said, "much speech we indulge in is idle talk. . . . Not every word we utter is truth. But we have no time to keep close watch over it. In present times particularly silence is golden. Deeds, not words, are the proof of our sincerity of purpose. "Silence covers all is the sound maxim."⁴⁶

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15. CWMG, Vol. 44, p. 12.
16. *Ibid.*, Vol. 36, pp. 261-63. The only time in his entire life Gandhi made an exception to his vow of silence was at the death of Magan Lal, who was, in Gandhi's words, "my hands, my feet, and my eyes" and "whom I had

singled out as heir to my all." He went to Magan Lal's house to comfort the family, and the day happened to be a Monday, his day of *Maun*. While breaking his silence then he said, "When I took the vow of silence, I allowed myself two exceptions. I decided that in a moment of unendurable physical pain, or to comfort some one in equal mental pain, I would break my silence." See Kaka Sabheb Kalelkar, *Stray Glimpses of Bapu* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1950), p. 14.

On Monday, 2 June 1947, in his meeting with Mountbatten the exchanges from Gandhi's side were on slips of paper: "I am sorry," read one such slip, "I cannot speak. When I took the decision about Monday silence, I did reserve two exceptions, that is, about speaking to high functionaries on urgent matters or attending on sick people. . . . There are one or two things I must talk about, but not today. If we meet each other again, I shall speak." Pyarelal, *The Last Phase* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House), Vol. 2, p. 214.

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On 19 January 1921, he recalled that on visiting the *Kumbha mela* in 191, he felt disappointed by the ornamental conduct of the Indian *Sadhus*. The whole night he kept asking himself as to what could he do so that the *Sadhu* in our country becomes *Sadhu* in the real sense of the term. "Finally, I took a vow . . . I shall not say what it is but many believe it is a difficult one to keep."

Gandhi had vowed to eat only five articles of food. See, Raghavan Iyer, *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, Vol. 1, footnote 3, pp. 14, 376. Gandhi had vowed not to take milk at all, ever since he came to know that cows and buffaloes were subjected to a process called *Phooka* so as to earn money. But during his campaign to recruit soldiers for the ongoing World War to defend the British empire, he ruined his health. From then on he started taking goat milk.

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Before starting the Salt Satyagraha on 12 March 1930, Gandhi took the vow not to return to Sabarmati without winning "Poorna Swaraj." See B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *Indian National Congress* (Delhi: S. Chand & Company, 1969), p. 453.

Mahatma Gandhi's Peace Army: A Paradigm

M. William Baskaran

HISTORIANS VIEW THE twentieth century as one of the bloodiest centuries of the recorded human history. Wars and violent conflicts were fought out at every nook and corner of the globe, coupled with planned mass murder, killings and destruction causing immeasurable pain and suffering to humanity. To add more suffering and misery, the fallacy of violence has been developed, sustained, and glorified by the institutions of violence and war. Now violent coercive methods are projected as widely accepted means to resolve conflicts at the local and international levels. Though humanity has enormous potentialities and resources to build up the methods of peaceful resolution of conflicts and institutions of peaceful world order, consistent and earnest efforts have not been made in achieving this.

Mahatma Gandhi had made attempts to invent and develop alternative methods and systems of nonviolence against violence (organised and unorganised) and institutions of violence. He expressed that "violence, thus could never be ended by counter violence. The only effective alternative to it was the way of nonviolence."¹ He also said that nonviolence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapons of destruction. He cautioned against the glorification of violence and its diabolic nature. He said: "It is a bad outlook for the world if the spirit of violence takes hold of the mass mind. Ultimately in destroying itself it destroys the race."² In modern time, Martin Luther King Jr. expressed this vividly as: "Today the choice is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence or non-existence."³

Gandhi was very much aware of the fact that violence, conflicts, and wars cannot be stopped and prevented by passivity, or by counter-violence or big conquest. He believed that "what is gained by the sword will also be

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lost by sword."⁴ Therefore he desired to work for peace through nonviolence in all its forms. He once observed that like war, peace should also be waged. This prompted him to think of an organization, with dedicated, well trained and unarmed people, which would work for peace through nonviolence. Gandhi called this proposed nonviolent body Shanti Sena (Peace Brigade). He explained this concept in 1938 thus: "Sometime ago I suggested the formation of Peace Brigade whose members would risk their lives in dealings with riots, especially communal. The idea was that this brigade should substitute the police and even the military."⁵

Concept of Shanti Sena

To Gandhi, Shanti Sena was an evolving concept throughout his life. He used the expression "Peace Brigade"⁶ to speak about this concept in concrete terms. But he also used many other expression such as "Shanti dal,"⁷ "Satyagrahi Army,"⁸ "Soldiers of Peace,"⁹ "National Volunteers Crops,"¹⁰ "Army of Peace,"¹¹ "Soldiers of Nonviolence,"¹² "Nonviolent Army,"¹³ "Nonviolent Volunteers Army,"¹⁴ "Satyagraha Brigades,"¹⁵ and "Unarmed Army"¹⁶ to describe his idea of Shanti Sena.

This clearly shows the evolutionary nature akin to which he broadly outlined the structure, functional, methods and quality of its members.

Birth of Shanti Sena (Discovery of the Instrument of Peace)

Gandhi conceived this idea not in a single day. To him, the power of nonviolence is not merely in its philosophy but in its practice. He said: "Nonviolence cannot be preached. It has to be practised."¹⁷ However, he put nonviolence to test before making attempts to organise it. In this regard, his whole life can be taken as the experiment on the concept of Shanti Sena. Gandhi like his father (who was helping people in his province to settle their conflicts in peaceful manner) was very active in peace making. Though his journey in the work of bringing peace was not smooth and successful at all times (Gandhi's attempt to bring reconciliation between his brother and the English officer ended in humiliation) his efforts were continuous and persistent. He believed that "there is no such thing as defeat in nonviolence"¹⁸ and in case of any setback, he considered this would be because of the imperfect nature of the wielder of nonviolence.

Gandhi's first success story in peacemaking began in South Africa, where he was went as a legal adviser but acted as a mediator and settled the issue between Dada Abdullah Sheth and Sheth Tyeb Haji Khan Mohammed. This incident converted him and made him responsible for settling many such conflicts later. He noted this in his Autobiography as "The lesson was so indelibly burnt into me that a large part of my time during the twenty years of practice as a lawyer was occupied in bringing about private compromises of hundreds of cases."¹⁹ Many such events can

be traced from the life of Gandhi in South Africa. His active role in settling the case of Balasundaram, an indentured labourer, and of Pansi Rustom, a businessman, bears testimony of his art of peacemaking. Other than these, his dynamic leadership and performance in organising Transvaal march in October 1913 (which he called "Army of Peace" with the band of 2037 men, 127 women, and 57 children), Indian Ambulance Corps (did relief and first aid work during Boer War in October 1899 and Zulu rebellion in April 1906), Famine relief work in Durban in 1897 and 1899, Black Plague relief work in Johannesburg in 1904 and the establishment of the Tolstoy Farm in 1910 (to rehabilitate the satyagrahi's families) can be taken as the germinal period of the idea of Shanti Sena.

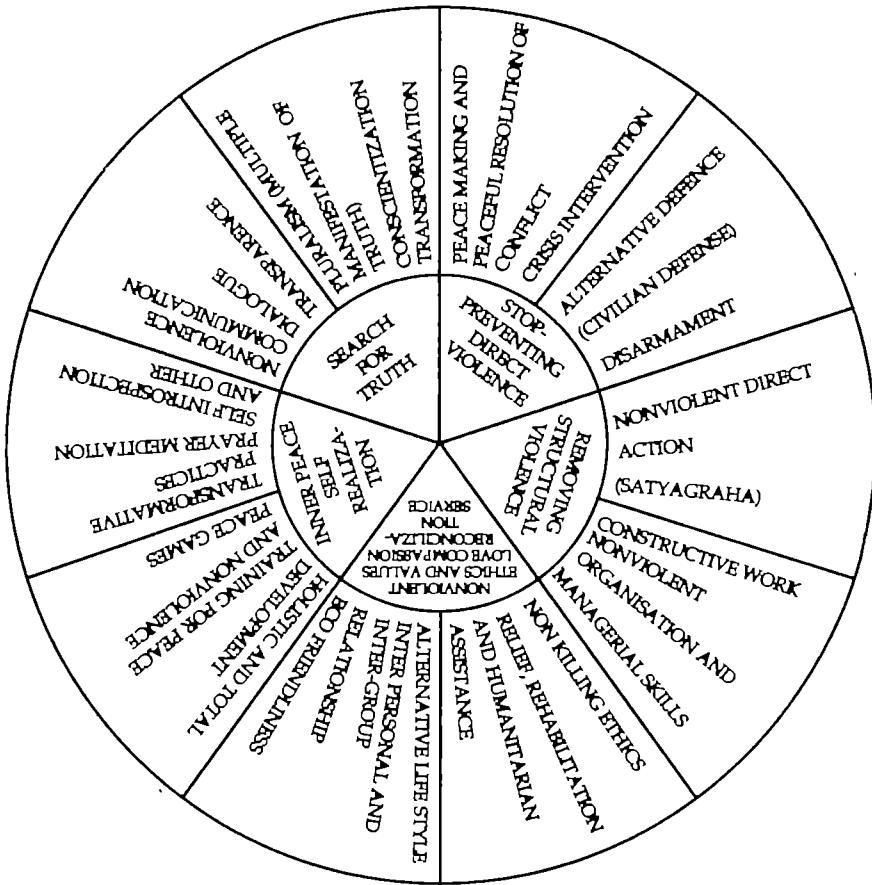
In India Gandhi strove for peace at different levels (individual, group, national, and international) and on several occasions. His innovative and creative role in solving the issue of Champaran agriculturists (1917), Ahmedabad mill workers (1917), Khilafat Movement (1920), and the organisational effort in the development of National Volunteers Corps (prototype of Shanti Sena) 1921, and Khudhai Khidmatgars (1929) in North Western Frontier, his direct action in Salt Satyagraha (1930) with the band of 79 volunteers and his Peace Mission to Noakhali and Bihar (1947) can be considered as the preview in the formation of Shanti Sena. Apart from his direct reference on the making of Shanti Sena, his peace actions at different periods of time could be taken holistically as the experiment on the formation and development of Shanti Sena.

In all these peace and its related efforts, Gandhi played different and multiple roles of a Shanti Sainik. Based on his overall experiments in peace and nonviolence, a new paradigm could be evolved for the betterment of the future world.

The Paradigm of Mahatma Gandhi's Peace Army

An ideal Shanti Sainik in Gandhi's perspective should have five major guiding principles such as search for truth, stopping and preventing direct violence, removing structural violence, nonviolent ethics and values (love, compassion, reconciliation, and service) and inner peace (self realization). The relationship among these five dimensions is integrative and taken as an organic whole. Pursuing all these five dimensions would qualify one as an ideal Shanti Sainik when there is a limitation in following all these five dimensions together. He believed: "There will never be an army of perfectly nonviolent people. It will be formed of those who will honestly endeavour to observe nonviolence."²⁰ However, if one is not good at one or two aspects of these, then that would not prevent one in becoming a Shanti Sainik. Though all the five core aspects of the inner circle may be important, a few in the second circle may not be present in a particular person, but still one can be a Shanti Sainik.

PARADIGM OF PEACE ARMY

*I. Search for Truth*

Gandhi pursued his quest for truth throughout his life with ever-increasing dedication and humility. He distinguished truth as absolute Truth and relative truth and equated absolute Truth with God and relative truth with the pole star of life. He believed that violence and conflicts arose from ignorance, lack of understanding, and refusal to change one's own perception considering that as truth. Since one has serious limitations in understanding real truth (absolute Truth) he suggests, one should always make conscious and constant efforts to realize truth in others. To him, truth is a goal to be reached by nonviolence. He said: "where there is ahimsa there is Truth and Truth is God."²¹

For Gandhi Truth was ever-increasing awareness or consciousness to have a holistic vision. Therefore it is imminent for a Shanti Sainik who follows the pursuit of Gandhi to undertake the search for Truth through various means like the following:

(a) Nonviolent Communication

It is an open communication using kind and unhurt approach in communication, that is, speaking, showing, having body language and listening. It can be called compassionate communication. Nonviolent communication has two important aspects; one guides us in reframing how we express ourselves and hear others. This means how we present, respond, perceive, feel, and want when we hear others. The second important aspect of nonviolent communication is that it "replaces our old pattern of depending, withdrawing or attaching in the face of judgement and utilization. We come to perceive ourselves and others, as well as our intentions and relationships in a new light. Resistance, defensiveness, and violent reaction are minimized."²² Gandhi practised this compassionate communication throughout his life, particularly during the time when he was unfriendly and unsavourily criticised by his friends and political opponents.

(b) Dialogue

To know and respect the truth residing in others. It is not merely sharing of information and knowledge; rather it is a process of building desirable and successful human relationships. It bridges the understanding gaps and develops genuine openness for hearty interaction between two friends.²³ Since it is held that different men perceived ultimate reality differently and that a richer view of it could only be attained by dialogue between them, it not only tolerated but also respected and welcomed diversity and encouraged discussion between its constituent groups.²⁴ In dialogue people listen and respond to one another with an authenticity that forges a bond between them.

(c) Transparency

It means transparency is one's own life and in relationships with others. Gandhi said: "Truth hates secrecy. The more open you are and the more truthful you are likely to be."²⁵

(d) Pluralistic

Having faith in multiple manifestations of Truth (God), that is, respecting all religions as one's own. It is defined as "one keeps one's own religion and yet at the same time maintains a curious, friendly, and respectful stance towards the beliefs and practices of the people of other faiths."²⁶

(e) Conscientization

It is the process by which one learns to critically relate oneself and one's work to nature and culture. It enables human beings to reject their status as oppressed objects and achieve their ontological vocation to become

subjects.²⁷ Conscientization, if carried out, would result in millions of poor people being awakened and, as a result, overthrowing existing power structures and power relationships.²⁸ Therefore conscientization means having better awareness about the issues faced by people and the possible nonviolent way out through education and other methods. Gandhi said "propaganda of nonviolence is the mission of my life."²⁹

(f) Transformation

Transformation is willingness to undergo change when new truth is found. When Gandhi explained about nonviolent revolution, he said: "It is not a programme of 'seizure of power'. It is a programme of transformation of relationships, ending in a peaceful transfer of power."³⁰

II. Stopping and Preventing Direct Violence

Stopping and preventing direct forms of violence such as killing, injuring, destruction of property, war, militarization, etc., are the most important tasks of Shanti Sena. Gandhi believed that nonviolence alone could solve these problems. He said: "Mankind has to get out of violence only through nonviolence."³¹ He also observed: "In the age of the atom bomb, unadulterated nonviolence is the only force that can confound all the tricks of violence put together."³² He said that humanity has to make a clear choice between peaceful resolution of conflict or total destruction. His experiences in the field of conflict and war made him to be the advocate of nonviolence and peaceful resolution of conflict. The following methods could be used to stop and prevent direct violence:

(a) Skills for Peace-Making and Peaceful Resolution of Conflict

By applying the methods of counselling, dialogue, negotiation, mediation, arbitration, and legal and judicial methods by adopting a win-win approach.

(b) Crisis Intervention

A Shanti Sainik should plunge into action even before the conflagration takes place. He should also put himself in between the conflicting parties as buffer force/interposition to stop war and fighting and he will also undertake riot and dispute management.

(c) Alternative Defence

The aim is to deter and defeat internal and external attacks by way of developing a human wall against invading army and organizing civilian defence. It means that when an external invader occupies the state by deposing the legitimate government, the invading army has to be resisted and ultimately worn out by way of non-cooperation, boycott, and disobedience by the citizens of the country.

(d) Disarmament

Disarmament means following unilateral/bilateral/multilateral approaches in stopping the production and deployment of all kinds of weapons. It also means abolishing the existing conventional, nuclear, and other kinds of lethal weapons. Gandhi said: "Peace will never come until the great powers courageously decide to disarm themselves."³³

III. Removing Structural Violence

One of the the most crucial problems of the present world is the existence of structural violence, that is, the prevalence of inequality, injustice, exploitation etc. An inbuilt violence can be seen in the structures of social, political, economic, religious, cultural, and all other aspects of human life. This should be challenged and a new structure has to be built upon the basis of truth and nonviolence. It requires some of the following activities:

(a) Nonviolent Direct Action (Satyagraha)

This is needed when basic issues of justice, freedom, etc. are involved. Once other peaceful methods of conflict resolution fail, one has to use nonviolent direct action to achieve justice and liberation. Nonviolent direct action involves non-cooperation and self-suffering. This will attain the status of Satyagraha only when it has truth, love, and spirituality. Nonviolent direct action needs planning, resources, training, strategy, leadership, etc. to counter violence.

(b) Constructive Work

Constructive work is often a long-term strategy to build up parallel and alternative peace structures in all spheres of life. Sometimes it can also become a struggle technique as in the case of Khadi and Village Industries during the British period.

(c) Nonviolent Organization and Managerial Skills

To Gandhi, building organizations were the challenges to nonviolence, but he knew that they were inevitable. He expressed this when a question rose in his mind, can love be organized. And if so, how? He explained, "Organization in the orthodox sense may not be possible. But there is no bar to united nonviolent action. I am trying to show by a series of experiments that it is possible. It has its own technique."³⁴ He built many institutions to propagate and practise nonviolence on the lines of more people participation, no exploitation, care and concern for each other.

IV. Non-killing Ethics and Values

According to Gandhi, "bravery consists in dieing, not in killing."³⁵ To him, nonviolence is the supreme law of human life. Therefore he denounced

killing in its all forms (killing individuals, mass killing, killing non-human beings, showing lack of love and kindness towards human and non-human beings etc.) Thomas Merton in his article "Faith and Violence" posits: "Modern technological mass murder is abstract, corporate, businesslike, cool, free of guilt feeling and therefore a thousand times more deadly and effective than the eruption of individual violence of a few desperate teenagers in the slums. But our antiquated moral theology myopically focuses on individual killing on our doorstep. But it blesses and canonizes the antiseptic violence of corporately organized murder, because corporate murder is respectable, efficient, clean, and, above all, profitable." Therefore Shanti Sainiks, while focusing nonkilling, as their basic operational philosophy, should also resist planned mass killing (war) and nourish the values of love, compassion, reconciliation, and service towards other human beings and non-human beings. To convert this ideal into practice, they should engage themselves in the following:

(a) Relief, Rehabilitation, and Humanitarian Assistance

This is needed whenever man-made and natural disasters strike humanity and put them into misery and total suffering. Gandhi wanted Shanti Sainiks to undertake fire fighting, first aid, supplying relief materials, serving as ambulance corps, and organizing relief camps.

(b) Alternative Lifestyle

By giving up consumerist culture and leading a self-reliant, sustainable and nonviolent life, one can constitute an alternative lifestyle. Gandhi expressed insicdted that "he who is possessed by nonviolence will express it in the family circle, in his dealings with neighbours, in his business, in congress meetings, in public meetings, and in his dealings with opponents."³⁶

(c) Interpersonal and Intergroup Relationships

Gandhi considered improving interpersonal and intergroup relationships among locals as service. He said cultivation of such relationships would even solve the problems of goondaism.

(d) Eco-friendliness

This means reverence for all living beings and things which surround us. We need to live in a creative relationship and sustain one another. We should not involve in activities which would harm the environment.

V. Inner Peace

A Shānti Sainik should be full of peace and creativity so that he can share them with others. A person who is not peaceful inside may not be able to

bring peace outside. Of course, there is a relationship between inner peace and outer peace. However, one should not escape placing the blame on the outer peacelessness. A Shanti Sainik has to develop inner peace in spite of the "encircling gloom." Gandhi used different methods like yoga, prayer, meditation, silence, fasting and rendering service to the most unfortunate etc. to attain this inner peace. He once said: "My greatest weapon is mute prayer."³⁷ He also said: "The positively necessary training for a nonviolent army is an immovable faith in God, willing and perfect obedience to the chief of the nonviolent army, and perfect inward and outward co-operation between the units of the army."³⁸ This inner peace is possible when the following training practices are adopted:

(a) Training for Peace and Nonviolence

This includes physical, intellectual, and spiritual training. Gandhi once said: "A small part of the preliminary training received by military is common to the nonviolent army."³⁹ He also said: "If intellect plays a large part in the field of violence, I hold that it plays a larger part in the field of nonviolence."⁴⁰ He explained the significance of training for nonviolence as "just as one must learn the art of killing in the training for violence, so one must learn the art of dying in the training for nonviolence."⁴¹

(b) Peace Games

Instead of competitive games, cooperative games should be taught and played for establishing peaceful society.

(c) Transformative Practices

Imperfection in nonviolence can be overcome by following transformative practices like yoga, meditation, prayer, self-introspection and other behaviour modification techniques.

The guiding principles and dimensions of Shanti Sena have an organic unity. These may enable a person to acquire a Shanti sainik status but a true Shanti Sainik emerges out of an organic and holistic blending of these different dimensions.

Mahatma Gandhi was a rare genius in recognizing the inevitable need for Shanti Sena for our times and for the future. He said: "It is my unshakable faith that, if we have sufficient number of nonviolent soldiers, we are sure to succeed even in this new field, apart from the saving of the needless waste of crores of rupees."⁴² He was so optimistic in this regard that he visualized that "an army, however small, of truly nonviolent soldiers is likely some day to multiply itself. An army of those who are not truly nonviolent is never likely to yield any use whether it increases or decreases."⁴³ This clearly shows that he was far ahead of his time. The post-Gandhian era, slowly but definitely, widens the Gandhian vision of Shanti Sena further.

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Mahatma Gandhi

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The Technique of Satyagraha: A Study in Gandhian Political Philosophy

M. Madhusudhan

Introduction

CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE,¹ A familiar concept in the West, has usually been understood to be substantially an individual consideration; it means resistance or refusal to obey a given law, usually on the ground that such law offends the individual's conscience or is repugnant to higher law towards which the individual owes prior allegiance. The problem thus has been one of competing, conflicting moral values, and the solution is generally supposed to lie necessarily with the individual.

In India, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, "experiments" (as Gandhi called them) which had first been undertaken in South Africa were extended beyond the individual protest. Later, experiments done during the struggle for Indian independence carried mass action beyond the confining limits of civil disobedience. Out of these emerged a new technique which Gandhi called Satyagraha.² According to Joan V. Bondurant, "Gandhian Satyagraha embraced the methods and the essential philosophy of civil disobedience, but through its application and refinement it became a technique of social and political change which transcended the substantial limitations of the earlier concept."³

In India, under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, Satyagraha became something more than a method of resistance to particular legal norms. Indeed, it became an instrument and a technique for the removal of ills which affect society and for bringing about desirable social change. According to M. Venkatarangaiya, "Gandhi made use of the technique for the redressal of the grievances of the Indian community in South Africa, for

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the removal of untouchability in India, for easing communal tensions, for securing relief to the indigo cultivators of Champaran who were oppressed by the European planters, for securing similar relief to the peasants of Bardoli, and, above all, for ridding our country of the curse of foreign rule."⁴

The significance of Gandhi's contribution, however, lies in the fact that by the time he appeared on the political scene in India, the situation was one which generally precedes violent revolution. Most of the politically conscious people were disgusted with the evil of British rule which impoverished and demoralized the nation in a variety of ways. The Indian National Congress, which was the most important of all the political bodies working in the country, tried all sorts of peaceful and constitutional methods for reforming the system of government. Its efforts proved to be of little avail. Even after extremists like Tilak appeared on the scene, no effective plan of mass action was devised though they denounced the government in much stronger language. It was then that the anarchists and the terrorists made their appearance and preached and practised the cult of the bomb. There was the growing danger of widespread violence. It was in this situation that Gandhi came forward with his weapon of Satyagraha or nonviolent mass resistance which he had already successfully tried in South Africa.⁵

Thus it was as "a technique of action intended to replace methods of violence" that Satyagraha made its appearance, first in South Africa, and later, in India and the key to an understanding of Gandhian political philosophy is this technique of Satyagraha. We are here concerned mainly with this premier means of Gandhi. For an analysis of the function of the Gandhian concept of Satyagraha, one cannot, however, turn to the writings of Gandhi for a definitive statement in political theory; for, Gandhi was not a theorist in the true sense of the word. He was rather "a political actionist and a practical philosopher." From his works (of book length size), articles, pamphlets, speeches etc. one can extract the Gandhian concept of Satyagraha.

The Concept of Satyagraha

The entire philosophy of Satyagraha is based on the premise that truth alone can be victorious; for, Truth is "that which is," while untruth is "non-existent," "if untruth does not so much as it exists, its victory is out of question. . . . And Truth being that which is can never be destroyed."⁶

The search for truth has long occupied the minds of men. The concept of the infinite, the absolute, has taken many forms, its role in religion and philosophy issuing at times in disquieting dogma. But Gandhi was fully aware that the absolute cannot be known by the yet unfulfilled human mind. Gandhi never claimed to know the truth in any absolute sense, and he repeatedly reminded others that man's inability to know the truth

required that he maintains an unceasingly open approach to those who would differ with him. For, he added "what appears to be truth to the one may appear to be error to the other."⁷

Gandhi, in search of absolute truth, concerned himself more intensely with the means whereby the realization of such truth might be advanced. According to Gandhi, to advance towards the absolute truth, we should hold by the relative truth, that is, what we consider to be truth.⁸ Thus the "truth" concept which enters into the technique of Satyagraha is clearly that of the relative truth. As Gandhi pursued his experiments with Satyagraha, "the relative character of truth as an operative principle became the stronger and the concept settled solidly into the sphere of ethical consideration."⁹ The emphasis became more and more specific, while the end, the realisation of God, which is Truth, becoming increasingly indeterminate.¹⁰ He, thus, finally evolved the concept of nonviolence as a concept of means.

To Gandhi, nonviolence is the means, Truth is the end, and, hence, they are inseparable. For, "Satyagraha is the vindication of truth, not by the infliction of suffering on the opponent but by on one's ownself." Truth, nonviolence and self-suffering are thus the three basic concepts of Satyagraha. The inseparable combination of truth and nonviolence in the Gandhian position forms the nucleus of the Gandhian solution to the problem of means. To proceed towards the goal of Truth—truth in the absolute sense—the way must lead through the testing of relative truths as they appear to the individual performer. The testing of truth can be performed only by strict adherence to "ahimsa"—action based upon the refusal to do harm, or, more accurately, upon love.¹¹ For, truth, judged in terms of human needs, would be destroyed, on whichever side it lay, by the use of violence; nonviolence, or "ahimsa," becomes the supreme value, the cognizable standard by which true action can be determined. As Bondurant¹² notes, if there is dogma in the Gandhian philosophy, it centres here; that the only test of truth is action based on the refusal to do harm. Although, he admitted of error and indecision at many stages of his applied experiment, and recognised the limitation on human capacity to achieve nonviolent action, the one principle and ideal to which he adhered to the end is the theme of *ahimsa*—the supreme and only means for the discovery of social truth.

Further enquiry into the meaning of nonviolent action will bring the third fundamental element of Satyagraha, viz., self-suffering, for "nonviolence in its dynamic condition means conscious suffering. It does not mean meek submission to the will of the evil-doer, but it means the pitting of one's whole soul against the will of the tyrant. Working under this law of our being it is possible for a single individual to defy the whole might of an unjust empire."¹³

Self-suffering in the Gandhian ethic and in his action technique has several essential characteristics. It is directed, first of all, towards the moral

persuasion of one because of whom it is undertaken. It is not a substitute for inability to use violent means to achieve victory over an opponent; it is not a "weapon of the weak." Self-suffering is clearly of a different character from cowardice; nor is it to be exercised indiscriminately. Self-suffering differs from violence in that violence consists of doing injury to another. To resort to self-sacrifice and voluntary submission to injury is a positive policy and is not merely a matter of last resort. Gandhi was careful to distinguish his method from that of passive resistance, which either suggests lack of capacity to employ violence or tends to be a preliminary step to violence. It should be noted further that submission was never an element of this concept.

Just as *ahimsa* carries in the Gandhian ethic the positive meaning of love and goodwill, self-suffering requires the positive attribute of courage. In every case a satyagrahi (one engaged in Satyagrahi) must refuse to do that which his conscience forbids him to do and must preserve the dignity of the individual, though it means loss of property or even life.¹⁴ The element of self-suffering or sacrifice in Satyagraha is similar to the ultimate means of realizing that characteristic so eminent in Western moral philosophy: the dignity of the individual. In proceeding to consider the role of the individual in the Gandhian ethic, one is reminded of the following observation:

There are two entirely different types of sacrifice. It is one of the tragic facts of life that the demands of our physical self and the aims of our mental self can conflict; that actually we may have to sacrifice our physical self in order to assert the integrity of our spiritual self. This sacrifice will never lose its tragic quality. Death is never sweet, not even if it is suffered for the highest purpose. It remains unspeakably bitter, and still it can be the utmost assertion of individuality.¹⁵

The truth concept as it functions in the Gandhian technique of Satyagraha has been shown to be that of relative truth. The objective standard by which truth can be judged is a human standard expressed in terms of human needs. The discovery of truth, of the resolution of conflict arising out of differences of opinion as to what is truth, must be prosecuted through nonviolent action. Action based on the refusal to do harm often required dealing with violence which may be instigated by the opponent in a conflict. Self-suffering is the further means by which the relative truth is tested.

As opined by Bondurant, to the three fundamentals of Satyagraha may be added certain corollary elements. Truth in Satyagraha leads to an ethical humanism. Ahimsa (nonviolence) leads in turn to social service. Self-suffering for demonstration of sincerity implied sacrifice and preparation for sacrifice, even including death.¹⁶ These are the principles which infuse the concept of Satyagraha.

Unlike Marxists and Fascists who work from outside and work to the inner, Gandhi starts from the soul within and works his way out to the environment. In his plan of social and moral regeneration, Gandhi, no doubt, attaches great importance to the individual with whom lies the first step, but he also makes the institutional approach. Thus Satyagraha works from the individual to the social order and also from the social order back to the individual.

Gandhi insists upon the power of man's will together with his reason to effect change in his society. Satyagraha is the technique he developed to point its direction. Gandhian Satyagraha avoids the practical pitfalls of ethical relativism by establishing an objective standard of judgement in terms of social criteria. Gandhian ethic must not only be decided in terms of socially expressed human needs; it must also be tested by nonviolence. The element of self-suffering or sacrifice provides the ultimate alternative.

Satyagraha in Action

Gandhian Satyagraha is essentially a technique of action. It seeks to effect change and it operates within a conflict situation. As do all techniques of action for effecting change, it employs force. But the character and the result of the force of Satyagraha are essentially different from those of conventional violent techniques of action during conflict.

When the principles that infuse the concept of Satyagraha are applied to specific political and social action, the tools of nonviolent action are devised. Those which were most commonly employed during the national movement in India are non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

Non-cooperation may include strike, walk-out, *hartal* (voluntary closing of shops and businesses, usually for a twenty-four hour period), and resignation of offices and titles. In principle, non-cooperation is simply the refusal to cooperate with a requirement which is taken to violate fundamental "truths" or refusal to cooperate with those responsible for such violations.

Civil disobedience is the direct contravention of specific laws and may include such activities as non-payment of taxes. Fasting may also be used as an adjunct to other forms of Satyagraha. Jail-going is a special non-resistance activity undertaken in a civil disobedience programme.¹⁷ The civil character of Satyagraha is maintained by the inviting of and the voluntary submitting to the sanction provided by the law for action contrary to the legal norm.

Based upon the experience with Satyagraha in action, the following essentials for the conduct of a mass Satyagraha campaign may be laid down:

- (i) fundamental rules governing the campaign,¹⁸

- (ii) code of discipline,¹⁹
- (iii) steps through which the campaign is to be pursued.²⁰

The specific action which is to be undertaken in a given Satyagraha movement will, of course, be determined by the nature of the circumstance itself. As is the extensive and intensive preparations for violent combat; much depends upon discipline, leadership, preparation, steadfast purpose, and the adoption of basic principles and procedures to specific circumstances.

An analysis of historic Satyagraha campaigns in India during the Satyagraha, as applied socio-political action, requires a comprehensive programme of planning preparation, and studious execution. Consideration from the choice of the objective through the selection of participants to the terms of final settlement give active expression to the elements which underlie the philosophy of Satyagraha. The action undertaken in the Indian Satyagraha campaigns varied distinctly from one circumstance to another. Tactics were evolved to meet the specific situation, both offensively and defensively. Strategy, however, remained broadly the same, based upon the considerations indicated above as steps or stages in a Satyagraha had been successfully employed not only against the British government in India, but also against orthodox and entrenched Brahmins (high-caste Hindus), against Indian mill-owners, and against local governments. Individual participants in these campaigns included members of highly differing economic, social, and religious communities on the one hand and labourers, peasants, and merchants, on the other hand. Women both from the peasantry and from highly educated and wealthy families, untouchables, Brahmins, Muslims, and indeed even from the Pathan warriors of North-West Frontiers took part in the campaigns launched by Gandhi.

Conclusion

Today Satyagraha remains the most potent legacy which Gandhi left to India and to the world. At the core of his "experiments with truth" lay an insistence that individual will and reason can effect social and political change. The touch-stone which resolves what otherwise might seem to be basically contradictory positions is the technique of nonviolent action or Satyagraha. As M. Venkatarangaiya rightly points out, it is this use of Satyagraha as a technique of mass resistance and the wider possibilities which lay in it of becoming a moral equivalent to war that attracted the attention of the whole world and established the claim of Gandhi to be regarded as the author of epoch-making social invention.²¹ Joan V. Bondurant rightly describes Satyagraha as the Gandhian dialectic in action.²² The Satyagrahi poses himself as the antithesis to the oppressor, perceived as the thesis. But the antithesis does not seek to destroy the thesis. Instead, it tries to transform it. What is more, it is ready to be transformed itself. The

Satyagrahi does not seek a one-side victory. To the extent Satyagraha seeks synthesis, Bondurant claims it to be superior to conservatism, idealism and marxism which fail to solve the problem as also liberal democracy which usually stays content with mere compromise.

Justifiably, the greatest tribute to Gandhi was paid by the greatest thinker of our times, Albert Einstein in the following passage:

"I regard Gandhi as the only truly great figure of our age. Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

Notes and References

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2. Literally the term "Satyagraha" means "firm grasping of truth" or "holding on to truth."
3. Joan V. Bondurant, *The Conquest of Violence: The Gandhian Philosophy of Conflict* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1965), p. 3.
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5. *Ibid.*, p. 32.
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7. M.K. Gandhi, *An Autobiography: Or the Story of My Experiments with Truth* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1945), p. 8.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 469.
9. Joan V. Bondurant, *The Conquest of Violence*.
10. For Gandhi, God and Truth are convertible terms and he even went a step further and said that Truth is God.
11. Gandhi sometimes identified ahimsa and love. The promixity of this concept to the Christian concept of charity and to the Greek *agape* is throughout apparent.
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17. It must be kept firmly in mind that "non-resistance" does not describe Satyagraha. Non-resistance describes only a step in a civil disobedience effort.

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21. M. Venkatarangaiya, *Gandhi's Gospel of Satyagraha*, p. 30.
22. See Joan V. Bondurant, *The Conquest of Violence*.

Ecology, Power, and Liberation

A. Jayabalan CMF

ENVIRONMENTAL CONFLICT IN contemporary human society is related to societies all over the world. It addresses the most intense and emerging social contradictions in India related to conflicts over natural resources. The contemporary period is characterized by the emergence of ecology movements in all parts of the world which are attempting to redesign the pattern and extent of natural resource utilisation to ensure social equality and ecological sustainability. It is to be noted that most of the natural resources are being used to fulfil only the basic survival needs of a large majority of people. The introduction of resource and energy-extensive production technologies under such conditions leads to economic growth for a small minority while, at the same time, undermines the material basis for the survival of the poor and marginalised who form the large minority. The ecology movements have questioned the validity of power relations and indicators of development. This paper attempts to analyse the "eco-crisis, power, and liberation."

Ecology: A Science of Human Survival

Taylor defines ecology as "a science of all relations of all organisms to all environments."¹ In an era of rising "green capitalism," where justice has become obsolete and has been separated from issues of sustainability, people's ecology movements in the Third World highlight the way in which issues of ecology and equity, sustainability and justice, are intimately linked to one another. In this sense, Dr Vandana Shiva calls ecology the "politics of survival"² based on the production and maintenance of life, not of profits.

It is high time for all men who wish that their posterity continues to live on earth should begin to understand the present condition of nature and work out adequate solutions to tackle this awful bizarre. The dictum "prevention is better than cure" is applicable in all fields of medicine,

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environmental medicine, and also for the prevention of environmental catastrophes, the awareness of the acuteness of the crisis and education of the people. It is beyond doubt that the environmental issues are man's survival issues and it must evoke a challenge in all people to reflect on environmental concerns and to derive concrete solutions in the light of their cultural and religious traditions.

Ecology as the Gravest Concern

The roots of ecological crisis extend to the origin of humanity itself. Ecology, as understood today and as a comprehensive scientific and practical trend, became a top priority of the scientific world and attracted world opinion only in the 1970s. But in the last three decades it continues to agitate hearts and minds of everyone and environmental protection often arises from a limited understanding of the causes and consequences of ecological degradation.

Recently an awareness of such dangers as acid rain, global warming, and ozone depletion has been rising for which policymakers are equally unprepared. In short, almost every significant environmental problem is fixed in a matrix of ecological, economic, political, and scientific causes and consequences that require quicker solutions. Men are not ready to recognise the fact that they are part of the earth. Power conflicts continue over the sharing of the natural resources equally. It can be rightly described as an ethical problem.

Facing the "Ecocide"

The word "ecocide" has been recently coined to denote the multiple capacity that humans have developed to destroy the earth, or at least to make it unfit for human life.³ By and large until our own times, we have assumed that growth in human productivity has been good. We have judged the "power" of countries by watching for increases in indexes such as population productivity, exports and imports, and national wealth. We have admired governments that have generated rapid economic development and criticized others letting their people stagnate and even regress.

As we are in a post-industrial era, people are not aware of the environmental pollution caused by automobile exhaust fumes, air planes, factories, and waste products that are emitted into atmosphere, rivers, and seas. We are rapidly reaching the time when air may become unfit to breathe and water unfit to drink. Oil spills ecologically conscious man, due to the alarming and dangerous signs of eco-crisis, caused by man's exploitation of the earth to quench his greed. Without the least apprehension of being contradicted, we can state that ecology has become one of today's vital problems. The ecological problems emerging from man's relationship with nature are complex and multi-dimensional. Today "people have

sensed that something is missing. They understand that environmental movements need a philosophical approach grounded on religious views. They realize that a perspective is needed that will place the best of all the reformists' response into a coherent philosophical-religious perspective—a view based on biocentric rather than on anthropocentric assumptions.”⁴

Why the Environmental Problems?

Enforcement of most environmental legislation depends on voluntary compliance by regulated interests, public and private, who frequently fail to comply. Many states in India lack technical resources to develop numerical standards for many ground water contaminants. Hence there is evidence of environmental damage or public health risks before acting to control those substances. The increase in vehicle population explosion leads to widespread emission and air pollution.

Continuing scientific and technical innovations also contribute to environmental problems by creating new substances or technologies with potentially serious environmental risks. Difficulties in and dangerous chemical waste products are turning lakes, rivers, and beaches into disease-infested sewers. Toxic by-products of industrial processes are threatening certain animal species with extinction and are slowly undermining the health and integrity of human species.⁵ The unequal distribution of income and population between Northern and Southern regions of the earth is likely to be aggravated rather than improved with time. Above all, nuclear bomb explosion (Pokhran 2000) and dumping of nuclear wastes without safety measures will no doubt lead men to ecocide.

Problem of Ownership and Power

One of the main reasons for the Indian predicament today is the unwillingness to face the questions regarding the ownership of natural resources. John Desrochers considers it as probably the most crucial aspect of development problems. This reluctance to confront the ownership issue is basically the reluctance to confront the problem of power. The economic theory that most of us have acquired conveniently passes over this entire problem. John Desrochers says: “In traditional neo-classical theory (which our textbooks are concerned with) the issues related to power are all evaded. The market (is) the only power in the system. But the market is an impersonal power and consequently a power without vested interests. The ‘purity’ of the system is thereby guaranteed. . . . The impression is created of a ‘free’ system in operation.”⁶

The dodging of the problems of power must also be seen as part of the attempt to retain power. The elites in countries like ours who rely on the “scientific” economics are not only academic and social elites, but power elites as well; their power arises from the vast inequalities that the present

system tolerates and perpetuates; for, they are very much part of an affluent minority. Consequently, any effective attempt to eradicate mass poverty and to arouse the masses is a direct threat to their existence and operations. A subtle device used by those who wield power is to pretend that power does not exist at all.

Functionality of Power

Marvin E. defines that power is a capacity to overcome part or all of the resistance, to introduce changes in the face of opposition (this includes sustaining a course of action or preserving a status quo that would otherwise have been discontinued or altered).⁷ Bertrand Russell says: "Power may be defined as the production intended effects. It is thus a quantitative concept; given two men with similar desires that the other achieves, and also others, he has more power than the other."⁸ However, the term "power" is analogous to force, influence, control, domain, authority, and the like.

The functions of power are as follows: (a) power is relational; (b) power is both an end and a means; (c) power is not static but dynamic; (d) power refers to capacity or ability to achieve certain ends; (e) power is never an absolute concept but is conditional and relative; and (f) power manifests itself as authority or control or influence.

Conflict and Power

There is now the growing imperialistic tendency and effort to bring the whole world under one order through institutions like the multinationals, transnationals, the World Bank, and the IMF. In order to bring about this new world order, an attempt is being made to bring about a global monolithic culture. Naturally there exists a conflict between monolithic culture and the local cultures the world over.

Those who are economically powerful become also politically powerful. They rule over the masses and dictate terms to them. But the powerless want power to be decentralised and shared. The conflict of human existence in reality is cosmic (ecological), socio-political (structural), inter-personal (relational), and intra-personal (depth dimension).

The ecological crisis means two basic imbalances in society: too much consumption by the powerful (rich) and too little consumption by the powerless (poor). It means the global crisis of the life system, from the destruction of forests and the spread of urban neuroses to the contemporary indifference towards the drama of millions of starving people and the nihilism of the heavy rock music that excites the youth today.

It is often said that imbalance of the earth system is due to technology which is still primitive, destructive, and polluting. But the present-day technology is certainly a high tax in the form of ecological evil. It brings

about the systemic exploitation of natural resources, soil poisoning, deforestation, atmospheric contamination, and so forth.⁹

Power and Domination

The year 2001 is called the year of "Dialogue between Culture and Civilizations." The fundamental characteristic of our civilization has become power and domination. It is historically and socially embodied in technology. Ours is unquestionably a technological civilization. That means we use the tool (techno) as our primary way of relating to nature. We treat nature and everything in it as an instrument for our own aim of power and domination. This instrumental approach disrupts immediacy, direct contact, feeling nature on our skin.

The instrument stands between us and nature and thus the basic solidarity uniting us to everything in cosmos and on earth is also broken. Jurgen Habermas rightly says: "Modern science uncovers even the most subtle structures of the real, creates the structure of knowledge in order to put into practical operation for the sake of the progress, industrial growth, and more profit. Thus it unfolds in the form of technique, transforming ecological relations."¹⁰

The will to domination is sometimes manifested as annihilating the power of the other (oppression) sometimes as subjecting it (subordination) and sometimes as coopting and harnessing it (hegemony). Power is established at the point around which everything is organised. This domination strategy stirs the impulses to command everything, control everything, make everything fit, and subject everything. It encourages ontologized (rather than functional) hierarchies, subordination, dualisms (who orders whom), and disruptions of solidarity which is the dynamic of all beings in the universe.

Natural Resources and Power

The natural resources and the raw materials available in a country also greatly contribute to national power. Regarding the sharing of natural resources, it is to be noted that there is division between North (rich) and South (poor). In the South, environmental degradation is strongly related to the global processes of trade and economic relations.¹¹ Often, natural resources in developing countries are being consistently "devalued" within the world market system, through rising debt on the one hand, and declining terms of trade of land and water-based products, on the other. It sounds vicious to preach long-term environmental care and concern in isolation of immediate concerns. The availability of enormous natural and mineral resources becomes a source of attraction to the North. Their lands become centres of imperialistic adventures and so many countries of the Afro-Asian region become subjects to the colonial holds of European powers for this very reason.

Environmental Politics and Power

Due to power, decisions made by the authorities or institutions in one society may affect other societies which have had no access to the decision-making process. National and international politics do exert their influence on the ecological problem. Having exploited the developing countries of their resources, the developed countries maintain that they wait to dump their wastes, even wastes from nuclear plants, somewhere.

When a conflict arises between ecology and development, the decision is usually taken in favour of development at the cost of ecology. It would seem that the capitalist greed is incompatible with the conservation of nature. However, there is no real attempt in present-day eco-politics to redefine development from the very basis, as ecological awareness really demands. The developed countries in other ways also hinder the developing programmes in developing countries. It is said that "India which receives World Bank fund wants a dam to irrigate an arid area, it starts building. One Mr Green in the United States fears that the dam would submerge some forests. He informs senator Lobby who in turn tells the president. The president picks up his phone and tells, Mr Money in the World Bank "not to lend India a cent more."¹² That is the end of the dam.

Eco-justice and Liberation

Today ecology movements (Chipko) linked to survival are more promising. They are the movements of the marginal communities who have been deprived of the benefits of the dominant development pattern but who bear all the costs of this development. Each particular exploitation (of nature) requires specific liberation. We see all other beings as existing for our purposes and all creatures as finding their meaning and praising God through human beings, to be used, dominated, and, where convenient, exploited. The understanding of reality behind the scientific and technological notion of modernity confirms that the same will to dominate. Descartes, Galileo, Newton, and Bacon taught that knowledge is power and that power is domination; that it means developing the capacity to subject to slavery in our service, as Descartes puts it.

Today in order to liberate urgently we need to develop an attitude of respect, of veneration, and of compassion, of brotherhood and sisterhood and of tenderness and fellowship with the whole of creation in its infinite grandeur and variety. This is the political demand of an ecological education if human beings are to learn to live with other beings, animate and inanimate, as citizens of the same society. Leonard Boff calls this "cosmic, ecological-social democracy."¹³

Towards Liberative "Ecological Culture"

In order to save the earth from catastrophies endangering, a lot of liberative steps ought to be taken. Among them may be counted the following:

- ★ Each individual on earth should develop the sense of oneness with nature.
- ★ We need to develop a relevant “ecosophy” which means a passionate concern for the well-being of all beings.
- ★ We need a holistic perception that nature is not just an object but a subject in which we subsist and return.
- ★ We must be in solidarity with participatory people’s movements for eco-justice.
- ★ Political movements must promote a nonviolent world order in which nature is conserved for human survival, if we need to evolve a new ecological world-view which supports cosmic R’ta (cosmic order) and cosmic shanti (cosmic peace).
- ★ It requires a “human ecology” which deals with different relationships and interactions between humans and the environment. It involves a wide variety of academic disciplines and policy fields.¹⁴
- ★ People must become aware of the eco-cris through education and consider it as their ethico-social responsibility.
- ★ It is the task of the world leaders to care for the “environmental management” and develop policies for conservation, sustainability, and development.
- ★ It is necessary to foster an “ecological culture” which is the totality of spiritual and material values created by society and aimed at preserving the historically shaped natural systems and perfecting the whole complex processes taking place within the context of man-environment relation. The following relevant words of Karl Marx become liberative: “When an ‘ecological culture’ is achieved, ‘complete unity of man with nature, the true resurrection of nature, the accomplished naturalism of man and the accomplished humanism of nature, takes place.”¹⁵

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Vinoba Bhave's Global Vision of Positive Peace

Geeta Mehta

Introduction

"ACHARYA VINOBA BHAVE'S life represents a harmonious blend of learning, spiritual perception, and compassion for the lowly and lost," writes Dr N. Radhakrishnan in his Foreword to the book *The Creed of Saint Vinoba*. Acharya Vinoba Bhave has been considered as the first saint of the nuclear age. His clear vision about the future age made Mahatma Gandhi choose him as the first Satyagrahi in 1940 during the individual satyagraha campaign. He came into the limelight when he launched the world famous Bhoodan (land gift) movement in 1951 and trekked all over India, collecting, as voluntary gift, no less than five million acres of land and distributing it to the landless. Hallem Tennyson visited him during this period and wrote a book called *Saint on the March*.

Bertrand Russell had requested Vinoba Bhave to participate in the demonstration to be held at the office of the British Air Ministry in London on 9 September 1962 against nuclear weapons. Russell said in his letter: "I have wished to write to you for some time because it seems to me that you have come to symbolize the role of conscience in human affairs."¹

Need to Develop Scientific Attitude

Science is the systematic study of the laws governing the process of physical world. It is the search for knowledge about the world, the search for understanding the world. It is closely related to philosophy. Bertrand Russell has pointed out that the various provinces of science and knowledge border on a circumambient area of the unknown, and that the speculative exploration of this area of the unknown constitutes philosophy. When

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speculation is replaced by the known about a certain area of the world, then that area becomes a part of science, and philosophy moves on to other matters.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave finds out support from the Upanishads that science operates on a higher plane than that of the mind. The fact that science is higher than self-conscious mind has been known from ancient times. The Upanishads say that Brahman is the first vital principle (prano brahma), then that "it is mind (mano brahma)" and lastly that "it is science (vijñanam brahma)." The vital principle is the plane of animal life, the mental is that of man, the scientific is that of the sages. In those early times the scientific plane of living was known, but it was not then essential for all men. It is now essential that all men should reach the plane of scientific thinking. Both spiritual insight and physical mind call upon the mind to transcend itself.²

The scientific attitude is a respect for facts; it is characterized by an experimental attitude towards life. If we have a scientific outlook, we shall regard every aspect of life as a field for research. Science has expanded, no doubt, but the scientific attitude is still lacking to a large extent; life in general has not become scientific.³

The Depth Directs to Spirituality

Science alone cannot satisfy the person. Those who have entered into the depth of science have turned to spirituality. A.N. Whitehead, R.C. Johnson, and Sir Oliver Lodge are a few examples.

Science is progressing and no one can check it. So if we want science to progress further, it must have a guide, it must be guided by spiritual power. Science is amoral, neither moral nor immoral; so it requires values. If it is wrongly guided, it will lead to hell; if it is rightly guided, it will lead to heaven. So right guidance can only come from spirituality. Survival of humankind is possible only by integration of science and spirituality.

With the further advance of science and technology, which would represent the further development of the power of the brain, the growth and promotion of saintly qualities of the heart such as self-restraint, tolerance, compassion, humaneness, nonviolence, and faith in the inherent goodness of man becomes absolutely essential.

Religion is Not Same as Spirituality

Different religions as we perceive them in the world are the different facets of the same reality observed by different prophets.

The Vedas declare that "the supreme Being is one;" but at the same time, they also say: "the wise sages describe it variously." Acharya Vinoba Bhave comments that the Vedas are not prepared to say: "the stupid describe it variously." They show the tolerant spirit of reconciliation of opposites and accommodation.⁴

The function of sacred treatises is to enlighten the mind, not to compel conformity. This is their limitation and in this itself lies their greatness.⁵

Acharya Vinoba enumerates five constituents basic to all religions:

- (i) Shruti—revealed Vedic Scriptures (that is, metaphysical theories and tenets).
- (ii) Smruti—religious law codes (that is, the long socio-religious tradition).
- (iii) Puranas—mythology (that is, biographical stories of ancient saints).
- (iv) Bhakti—devotion (that is, mode of worship).
- (v) Neeti—ethics (that is, moral varieties such as nonviolence, truth etc.).⁶

But all these components are not needed in these days of science. He further observes that because of science only true religion would survive and not the false one. Only a religion which is rational, which is not a figment of imagination, which has risen above desires and has done away with all sorts of distinctions including that of worship, could be named as spirituality.⁷

The first nuclear holocaust of August 1945 was yet to happen but the foresighted sage Vinoba could declare before it in June 1942 that the only way to freedom throughout the world is that science and self-knowledge or spirituality should be integrated.⁸

The Similarity between Science and Spirituality

The humility which we find in scientists should be the sine qua non of spirituality. That is the common factor between science and spirituality. Both are in search of "Truth." Truth is whole indeed. But still it has an outer appearance and an inner substance. So science will try to explore, peer into the inner substance, gradually proceeding from the outer appearance.

Gandhi had said that truth could be attained by nonviolence. Vinoba's idea is that truth can be attained by humility, objectivity, and non-insistence. It is so in science. There is no dogmatism in it. Only that is considered as correct which is testified by experiment.⁹

Science will never succeed in destroying the spiritual urge in man. Both have yet to evolve. Acharya Vinoba Bhavé observes: "Many are under the illusion that the Science of spirituality has reached perfection and now there is no room for any improvement. Modern scientists, however, are humble and they declare that Science will never reach perfection. Though we are contemplating a trip to the moon, they say, and though we have succeeded in sending an artificial satellite in an orbit around the earth, yet the knowledge that we have obtained hardly relates to an infinitesimal fraction of the infinite universe. . . . Just as science is growing everyday and will continue to grow hereafter with every new Scientific discovery or

invention, Spirituality also will continue to make progress with every new experiment undertaken.”¹⁰

Spirituality Includes Unity and Sanctity of Life

Spirituality points to truth that includes unity and sanctity of life. The belief in unity of life is not sufficient. Unity of life is a very abstract thing and it may not have that strength to stimulate us and lead us to right thinking. There are many things for which we have to use other tests than unity of life. Simply agreeing that life is one is not enough. Spirituality demands that one should have faith in absolute moral values, not relative moral values.

Spirituality of the modern variety stresses the need to join the hearts of the different peoples of the world to form a common brotherhood. It teaches us to break the barriers of the “I” and “mine” to subjugate the individual, communal, or national ego. If “I” end by including the whole world in my circle, well and good. The first practical implication of unity is that “I” should be absorbed into “We.” Only when we can think and speak of our spiritual striving, our devotion, will our work find its natural fulfillment, and individual and society be generated together. Unity brings harmony.

Samya Yoga as the Way to Unity

Acharya Vinoba Bhave does not just talk of abstract unity. He offered a theory of social reorganisation named as *Samya yoga*. *Samya yoga* seeks to build an equitable social order in which everything will have its right place. It is on the foundation of this principle that we want to build the Sarvodaya society, a society which provides for the full and free development of one and all.

Samya means:

- (i) Equality: social, political, economic, and scientific
 - (ii) Equanimity, that is, not to lose one’s composure under any circumstances
 - (iii) Identity with the deprived, the suppressed, the backward, indeed with all living beings
 - (iv) Parama samya mean’s complete identity
- (i) *Equality*:
- (a) Social: In the social field, Vinoba would like to establish equality by eliminating differences based on caste, creed, class, and sex.
 - (b) Political: The powers of the government will be decentralised and devolved. Gradually a stage will be reached when authority in every form will have become unnecessary and will, therefore, fade away giving rise to a perfectly free society.

- (c) Economic: Every man who works for the society to the best of his ability has a right to livelihood.
- (d) Scientific: Science is a great force which is neither moral, nor immoral, but amoral and its standards of value must be supplied for spirituality.

(ii) *Equanimity*: Mental equipoise is the highest *yoga*. It is higher than *jnanayoga*, *karmayoga*, and *bhaktiyoga*. Control over mind is at the root of all *yogas*.

This is the age of science and in this age equanimity is urgently needed. When people fight with one another, they are full of anger and feeling of enmity but scientists in the modern age have to keep their equanimity, they have to take decisions soberly and with a serene mind and take resort to mathematical calculations, while dropping the atom bomb. So the demand of the modern age is poise and peace. As never before, the modern world requires a *Sthitaprajna* (man with steadfast wisdom).

(iii) *Identity*: *Samya yoga* takes its stand on the inner unity of man according to Vinoba. Vinoba's ideal of *samya yoga* or reverence for all life, does not distinguish between man and man and even sees no ultimate difference in the spirit of man and other animals.¹¹ It holds that all life is one. And on the foundation of that spiritual unity it seeks to build an equitable order in which everything will have its right place. *Samya yoga*, says Vinoba: "is opposed to inequalities; it is not opposed to right discrimination. As a mother loves all her children equally and yet she feeds her weaker darling on milk which she may not give to others. This is an instance of wise discrimination. . . . And *samya yoga* makes use to the light of discrimination; it provides scope for development to every individual."¹²

(iv) *Parama Samya*: Identity is not to be established, it is already there; only we do not see it due to our ignorance. Thus an aspiration of *Saniya yoga* is a continuous endeavour which includes all kinds of *Saniyas*. *Parama Saniya* is the highest goal. It is a stage which transecends the reach of mind or reason. It is higher than scientific and moral *Samya*.

It can be named as metaphysical. It means there is no difference between animate and inanimate. Of course, there is no difference in two animates also.¹³

The consciousness of equality is absolutely essential in bringing about a climate of peace. There could be peace only among equals who consider themselves equals. Inequality breeds exploitation, fear, and strife.

Peace and equality should be both inner and outer. There could be no peace outside unless there is inner peace. By inner peace, I mean that the minds of all men should reach a state where they are free from fear, mistrust, free from the urge for self-aggrandisement and exploitation. The minds need to be oriented to promote nonviolence and peace.

Under the present circumstances, both scientific knowledge and spirituality would prove very helpful to man to lead a peaceful life. Just as in an automobile, there is an accelerator, manipulating whether its speed can be increased or decreased, and a steering wheel which gives a direction to it, similarly spirituality will show the direction to humanity and science will move in that direction with speed.¹⁴

Science and Spirituality: The Two Wings of Humankind

Man, like a bird, has two wings—science and spirituality—and he needs both together for his happiness. The design of every machine provides for two forces, one to generate energy for movement and the other to guide and control it. One cannot work without the other. A car has an engine and a steering wheel, so does a human being. We walk with our feet and not with our eyes, but the eyes show us where to go. Self-knowledge is the eye, Science is the feet. . . . Nothing can be done in the world without science, but science cannot go in the right direction without self-knowledge or spirituality.¹⁵

Spirituality is needed today because man has acquired immense power of science. It is fast developing and it would do great damage if it takes a wrong direction.¹⁶

Three forces are working in this scientific age. The first is “spirituality” which moulds human life. The second is “science” which, besides changing the external, influences the internal life as well and requires of man to rise above his mind. The third force that can prove effective is that of “trust.” On an individual assuring us that he would deal with us in a straight manner, we should take him at his word and accept him with full faith, notwithstanding the fact that his past belies his present professions. Only then can we win him over, transform him, and find entrance into his heart.

वेदान्तो विज्ञानम् विश्राश्रति शक्तयः विरत्रः ।

यासां स्थैर्ये नित्यं शान्तिं समृद्धिं भविष्यतो जगति ।।¹⁷

Vedanta is spirituality which teaches us unity of life. Unity can be practised by Ahimsa. Ahimsa is a way of living. Vedanta is a way of thinking. Vedanta thinking tells us what is; Ahimsa conduct tells us how to act. Each complements the other. Vedanta is the basis for the practice of life, Ahimsa is the house built on that foundation.

Science Guided by Spirituality Leads to Peace

Science and spirituality could combine and lead the world to greater harmony and happiness. Religion has not accomplished the abolition of war; it has often been the cause of wars. Therefore we are in need of spirituality. Science is now warning man that the mental equipment is no

longer sufficient and that he must now build his life on a scientific foundation. Man holds in his hands the power of the atom—the very building block of creation, and at the same time the energy which can destroy the creation itself. For life or death, the atom is in man's hands. Science and nonviolence together can bring heaven down to earth; science allied with violence can bring ruin. It is just because science has made so much of progress that nonviolence has assumed so much importance. If we want science to go on developing, we will have to accept nonviolence." No peace today, no life tomorrow."

Spirituality would compel the realisation of the necessity of observance of individual and social nonviolence and thus it will ultimately prevent the misuse of scientific inventions. Thus it will lead to world peace.

Bertrand Russell said in an essay "*The Future Shock*" published in 1914: "At present science does harm by increasing the power of rulers. Science is no substitute for virtue; the heart is as necessary for a good life as the head." The virtue is provided by spirituality. To promote and foster kind impulses is the function of spirituality.

In spirituality, people generally think of one's own peace, but in these days of science, it will not do. People hankering after individual samadhi are not relevant today. In this age of science, people in one part of the world should learn to feel identity of interests with people in another part. The unity of mankind needs this. Science has provided very quick means of communication and transport. It has pulled down old geographical barriers between the nations and brought them together as never before. This should not happen only in a physical sense but also in an emotional sense.

Isolation and separation in the world today means annihilation and death. Co-existence has become a condition for survival. Nonviolence and brotherhood are no more altruistic and idealistic concepts. They have the sanction of stark realism. Because of the phenomenal growth of science, brotherhood and love have acquired a new relevance. Society cannot last without them. If hate and rivalry continue as before, human society will be destroyed by modern science. If brotherhood and love become the cementing force in society, modern science will create a new world of freedom, peace, and plenty.¹⁸

What is Peace?

While analyzing the concept of peace, Acharya Vinoba Bhave says: "Absence of war is not peace. Peace really connotes absence of fear. There would be peace only when no part of the world is afraid of or exploited by any other part."¹⁹

Today the whole world is in a terrible dilemma. While the search is for peace, preparations are going on for war. The world is terrified at the latest inventions of science. It is in despair at its experience of attempts to

establish peace through war and to remove economic disparities through struggles. It is waiting for a method of revolution which is in consonance with our aspirations for brotherhood and which moves onwards establishing cooperation among men.²⁰

Nonviolent Revolution and External Aggression

Explaining the Sarvodaya way of peaceful revolution Acharya Vinoba Bhave says: "No revolution is possible now unless it is peaceful, and no peace will be stable without a revolution. Only those will be able to hold out now who are peaceful revolutionaries. The thought which assures a peaceful revolution is called Sarvodaya."²¹

He makes his view clear about external aggression also. Science has two aspects, the pure and the applied. Nonviolence also has two aspects, the theoretical and the practical. He held the view that only pure nonviolence is conducive to happiness, but when it comes to the matter of practising it, several questions arise. Some say on the basis of the Bible that it need not be looked into as to what party has been in the wrong, who committed the aggression, what was the former situation, history etc. All that one has to do is to ask one's own and other countries to stop violence. Moreover, the question arises whether nonviolence is an attitude of mind or an external technique, and the reply is that it is not only a technique but an attitude as well. And since the attitude is the main element, Vinoba was not clear that in case an occasion arises for an external resistance and from view point of society, it appears unapprovable even then it could be avoided.²²

The Ideal of Human Society

In the world of future, science and spiritual wisdom will have a place; power politics and sectarian religion will have none. Parties, power struggles and nationalistic interests are doomed, though they will give a lot of trouble before we get rid of them. Nevertheless they will have to go, because they cannot endure the light of science. Science has made the whole world one neighbourhood, more so in these days of Internet.

Among scientists and scholars there is a general agreement that a great nuclear war must be prevented and that ultimately we must develop a new world order based upon the principle of justice. The only way to prevent the destruction of civilization is to abolish war. No longer can disputes between great powers be settled by a test of military might. Nations have retained a sort of selfishness, which is called patriotism. It is necessary now to abolish this national selfishness and to replace it by loyalty to the whole humankind. Therefore Acharya Vinoba gave us the slogan of "Jai Jagat" (victory to the world) rather than "Jai Hind" (victory of India).

The ideal of humankind is that nonviolence and compassion should rule the society. Today the penal power is ruling while compassion and

nonviolence serve as maids. They may even disappear and with them perhaps humankind too. As against it, let there be a rule of compassion and let it alone endure in the world, while the penal power of the law withers away.²³ Peace dwells and harmony flourishes where compassion, tolerance, sensitivity, and understanding exist.

The people, who have developed nonviolence and compassion have very high morality and character and are free from attachment and hatred, would be elected to the centre and they would only advise and rule. In other words, the centre would have more of moral authority and less of physical power. World peace can be established only if we have such political structures in the world. Otherwise it is totally futile to hope for world peace.²⁴

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Dharma: A Gandhian Interpretation

B. Sambasiva Prasad

THE DISTINGUISHED PHILOSOPHER Dr M. Hiriyanna observes that Indian philosophy is a philosophy of values.¹ *Dharma* (virtue), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (pleasure) and *moksa* (self-perfection) are four such values recognised and discussed in depth in the Indian philosophical tradition. These values are called the “*purusarthas*,” that is, the objectives of a *purusa*. While *artha* and *kama* are considered secular or empirical values, *dharma* and *moksa* are treated as spiritual values. Among these values, *dharma* is considered the basic value and it is held that *artha* and *kama* are to be achieved through *dharma*. *Moksa* is considered the *parama purusartha*. Philosophers often debate over the question whether *purusarthas* are *trivarga* or *caturvarga*. According to the former view (*trivarga*), *dharma* is considered the highest *purusartha*, but for the latter view (*Caturvarga*) *dharma* is considered the instrumental value for achieving *moksa* which is the highest value. Despite varied arguments, all of them accept the view that *dharma* is the basic *purusartha*.

In the contemporary times Mahatma Gandhi gave a new interpretation to *dharma*. The aim of this paper is to expound, analyse, and critically evaluate Gandhi's concept of *dharma*. Gandhi's notion of *dharma* is basically derived from the Hindu tradition. Therefore an understanding of *dharma* as discussed in the Hindu tradition will help us to understand Gandhi's notion of *dharma* in a better way. Hence, in the first part of this paper, I will deal with the concept of *dharma* as discussed in the Hindu tradition and, in the second part, I will take up the concept of *dharma* as interpreted by Gandhi.

THE WORD *DHARMA* is derived from *dhr*, meaning to uphold, to sustain, or to nourish. The seers often use it in close association with *Rta* and *satya*. In the *Rgveda*, *Rta* is the right order of the universe. It stands for both the *satya* or

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the truth of things as well as the *dharma* or the law of evolution. The *dharma* or virtue is in conformity with the truth of things, *adharma* or vice is the opposite of it. The conception of *dharma* as a regulative principle is emphasized by all sastras. For sample, Srikrishna says in the Gita:

Dharmaviruddhah kamo'smi—"I am kama, not at strife with dharma." Dharma refers to the significance of virtues that are to be cultivated. Yajnavalkya in the Smṛti which goes by his name, lists nine such virtues—non-injury, sincerity, honesty, cleanliness, control of senses, charity, self-restraint, love, and forbearance. While some of these virtues like non-injury and charity have a reference to the good of others, the others like sincerity and self-restraint help to develop one's own character.

One of the best definitions of dharma is found in *Mahabharata* which defines dharma as that which holds together that which sustains all human beings.

Dharanat dharmam ityahuh, dharmo dharayati prajah

Kalidasa's depiction of the kings of Raghu dynasty as the ideal men is based on the principle of dharma. Referring to the qualities of Raghu kings, Kalidasa remarks: "The Raghu kings are those who sought wealth that might be given to others, whose words were measured for the sake of truth, who sought victory for glory's sake, and for the offsprings took into them their wives."

Tyagaya sambhrtarthanani, Satyaya mitabhasinam
Yasase vijigisunam, prajayai, gṛhamedhinam

Manu considers dharma as necessary for attaining the supreme goal of life. He reckons them as ten. They are, contentment, forbearance, gentleness, respect for others, purity, cleanliness, self-control, knowledge, philosophical wisdom, veracity, and patience.

Dhṛtiḥ, ksama damossteyam, saucanīndriya—nigrahah
Dhīr vidya satyamkrodhah dasakam, dharmalaksanam

Different systems of Indian philosophy interpret dharma in different ways. According to Mimamsakas, dharma is an action whose attainment is often put off to a future day. According to them, the act produces an appropriate effect, called *apurva*, which abides in the self of the agent until its record is reaped by him. Dharma, therefore for the Mimamsaka, yields its fruit through the intermediary of *apurva*. According to the followers of Nyaya-vaśeṣika, it is this *apurva* and not action, that is called dharma. Here dharma becomes a quality characterizing the self.

According to the dharmaśāstras, there are four sources of dharma: (1) revelation (Śruti), (2) sacred tradition (smṛti), (3) good custom of the virtuous people (śadācara), and (4) one's conscience (*ātmatuṣṭi*).

5.

Broadly, dharmas are divided into three kinds—Sadharana-dharmas, varnadharmas, and asrama dharmas. The cardinal virtues, namely purity, self-control, detachment, truth and nonviolence are considered as sadharana-dharmas. Varnadharmas are duties prescribed for people of different castes. Ashrama dharmas are the duties prescribed to man according to his asrama to which he belongs—brahmacharya, grhastha, vanaprastha, and sannyasa. According to Dr S. Radhakrishnan, the different stages of asrama dharma “indicate that life is a pilgrimage to the eternal life through different stages.”²

IN THE TWENTIETH century, Gandhi gave a new orientation to the concept of dharma. His interpretation of dharma is novel and worth considering. Gandhi’s exposition of dharma, though derived from the Hindu tradition, and his understanding of dharma is more a result of his social and political situations. He has modulated the Hindu conception of dharma to suit to his times and situations. His dharma aimed at establishing an orderly society, a Sarvodaya state, and to redeem India from the British rule. Under these circumstances Gandhi includes bread-labour, swadeshi, equality of religions, removal of untouchability as the dharmas, which we do not generally find in Hindu scriptures.

Gandhi said that Patanjali gave five cardinal virtues. But the list needs to be expanded into eleven, suiting to his times. They are: nonviolence, truth, non-stealing, brahmacharya, non-possession, bread labour, control of the palate, fearlessness, equal regard to all religions, swadeshi, and removal of untouchability. Out of these, says Gandhi, “truth” is the basic dharma from which all the rest are derived. They are nothing but the extensions of truth. Let us discuss these *dharmas* as expounded in Gandhian literature.

First, the truth. Gandhi says that truth is “what the voice within tells you;”³ what is truth to one is not necessarily the truth to the other. Therefore truth has to be experimented with. Such an experiment needs certain prerequisites. A person who experiments on truth should take the following vows: the vow of truth, the vow of *brahmacharya* (purity), the vow of nonviolence, of poverty, and of non-possession.⁴

Following truth does not mean simply speaking truth. It should percolate to one’s speech, action, and thinking. If one’s speech is true, but his actions and thinking are opposite to truth, then he is not truthful. Truthfulness is not merely an accord between mind and speech. It means voicing good thoughts, which are beneficial and liked by people—*Satyam bhutahitam priyam*.

Initially Gandhi was of the opinion that God is truth but after having taken into account the atheists, Gandhi revised his view and stated that truth is God. In other words, Gandhi preferred truth to God. But in the Vedic and the Upanishadic literature we do not come across this kind of a

view as we find in Gandhi. God is the highest reality and any quality is subservient to Him in Vedas. But Gandhi reverted it and said that Truth is the highest principle.

Ahimsa or nonviolence is another important *dharma* for Gandhi. "Not to hurt any living thing is no doubt a part of *ahimsa*. But it is its least expression."⁵ In its wider sense, it means not to hurt even by evil thought, by undue haste, by lying, by hatred, by wishing ill to anybody. Thus for Gandhi, *ahimsa* is to be practised not only in action but also in thought and word.

Gandhi observes that truth and *ahimsa* are intertwined. They are so closely related as the relationship between the two sides of a coin. In fact, while truth is the end, *ahimsa* is the means. The objective, namely Truth, is to be reached through *ahimsa*. Gandhi says that truth and *ahimsa* are convertible terms. "Without *ahimsa*, it is not possible to seek and find truth. Ahimsa and truth are so intertwined that it is practically impossible to disentangle and separate them."⁶

We find Gandhi's concept of *ahimsa* in his approach to religion. He did not prefer one religion to another. On the other hand, he followed equal respect for all religions. Religion, says Gandhi, is one. Different men put it in different ways. We cannot say that one interpretation is correct and the other is false. Everybody is right from one's own perspective but it is impossible that every person is wrong. Therefore "the necessity of tolerance, which does not mean indifference to one's own faith, but a more intelligent and purer love for it."⁷ Gandhi further opines that we should not merely tolerate but also respect the other faiths as our own. He prefers the term *ahimsa* to the term "tolerance" because tolerance may imply an assumption of the inferiority of other's faiths to one's own, but *ahimsa* teaches the same respect for other religious faiths as we accord to our own.

An important characteristic feature of the Gandhian notion of *ahimsa* is that it is not rigid. Rather, it is flexible. He considered that killing of rabid dogs, though it involves an amount of *himsa*, is still a duty. Gandhi remarks: "At times we may be forced with the unavoidable duty of killing of man who is found in the act of killing people."⁸ So also he opines that it is the duty to kill the microbes by the use of disinfectants. It is "violence and yet a duty."⁹

Asteya (non-stealing) is another important *dharma*. It is implicit in truth.¹⁰ It is not possible that a person steals but at the same time claiming to know truth or cherish love. One's observance of non-stealing will bring about a progressive reduction of one's wants.

Gandhi talks of two kinds of—stealing—physical and mental. To steal objects is physical stealing. To desire to possess other's objects is mental stealing. Gandhi also refers to stealing of ideas. If one claims the ideas of the other as his own, this is also a kind of stealing. Stealing of other's ideas and claiming them as one's own is a practice of untruth.¹¹

5 Brahmacharya is another virtue. The root meaning of brahmacharya is a code of conduct designed in search of *Brahman*. By *brahmacharya*, Gandhi does not mean only control of carnal desires, but control over all the organs of sense. "*Brahmacharya* thus means control in thought, word, and action of all the senses at all times and in all places."¹² For Gandhi, *Brahmacharya* is the best method for birth control. Married people should follow *brahmacharya*, that is, self-control, when they do not desire progeny. It is preferred to artificial means of birth control.

Gandhi suggests four steps to *brahmacharya*. They are: (i) the realization of its necessity; (ii) control over the palate and all the other senses; (iii) to have clean companions—clean friends and clean books; and (iv) prayer. Gandhi observes that *brahmacharya* will enable a person to rise to the height of universal love. Family life creates a boundary wall round his/her love. In view of this, Gandhi had gone to the extent of suggesting to his ashramites to keep away from marriage.¹³ He advised them that persons who have already married should live as if they were not married, that is, they have to live like brothers and sisters in order to rise to the height of universal love.

Referring to the dharma of non-possession (*aparigraha*), Gandhi says that a seeker after truth should not hold anything for tomorrow. While the poor man wants to become a millionaire, the millionaire wants to become a multi-millionaire. Where is the end of the possession of property and money? In the modern world, says Gandhi, man is advanced in hoarding things rather than disowning them. "Civilization in the real sense of the term," says Gandhi, "consists not in the multiplication but in the deliberate and voluntary reduction of wants. This alone promotes real happiness and contentment and increases the capacity for service."¹⁴

Gandhi was not only a preacher of *aparigraha*, but he also put it into practice in his own life. Once, an American Insurance agent persuaded Gandhi to take an insurance policy and under these circumstances Gandhi took it. Subsequently he was reminded of the Gita's message of *aparigraha* (non-possession) and *samabhava* (equability) and under the impact of these ideas, Gandhi allowed the insurance policy to lapse. Further, while Gandhi was about to leave South Africa, a number of gifts of gold, silver, and articles of costly diamonds were given for his services to the people there. But he was not attracted to them. He was of the strong opinion that a public worker should not accept costly gifts. He decided to form a trust and utilised these gifted articles for public service.

Labouring for one's own bread is a *dharma* for Gandhi. He learnt the idea of bread labour by reading Tolstoy's writings. Also, Ruskin's *Unto this Last* influenced Gandhi on this issue. Gandhi observed that everyone has to work for his food. God created man to work for his food and therefore those who ate without work are thieves.¹⁵ If everybody lives by the sweat of his brow, the earth would become a paradise. According to Gandhi, the needs of the body must be supplied by the body. Doctors, lawyers, and the

like should work merely for the benefit of society and not for the Self and hence have to earn their food by bread labour. Obedience to the law of bread labour, Gandhi believes, will bring about "a silent revolution in the structure of society."¹⁶

By propounding the concept of bread labour, Gandhi is not belittling intellectual labour. What he means is that no amount of intellectual labour is a compensation for bodily labour. In fact, Gandhi extended the idea of bread labour to scavenging. He said that everyone should "commence bread labour as a scavenger. Scavenging, thus intelligently taken up, will help one to a true appreciation of the equality of man."¹⁷ The objective of the Gandhian approach to bread labour is to eradicate the differences between different professions. He wanted to establish a society wherein the work of a cobbler should be felt as important as that of a lawyer.

Control of the palate is another *Sadharana-dharma* for Gandhi. He is of the view that if one could control one's palate, then one could control the rest of his senses. In fact, he suggests that control over the palate is one of the vital steps for *brahmacharya*.

Fearlessness is another virtue. It is responsible for the growth of other noble qualities. He asks: "How can one seek truth, or cherish love, without fearlessness?"¹⁸ Fearlessness means freedom from all external fears. It is the freedom from the fear of disease, bodily injury and death, of dispossession, of losing one's nearest and dearest, of losing reputation and the like.¹⁹ But Gandhi says that about the internal foes, one must always fear. "We are rightly afraid of animal passion, anger, and the like."²⁰ Gandhi considers fearlessness as a *dharma* in view of his freedom struggle for India. A *Satyagrahi* should not be afraid of his life or the life of his kith and kin. Also, he should not be afraid of losing his property when he becomes a trustee. Under these circumstances, Gandhi conceives fearlessness as a *dharma*.

Respect for other religions is yet another important *dharma* for Gandhi. The study of other religions, besides one's own, Gandhi said, "will give one a grasp of the rock-bottom unity of all religions."²¹ Gandhi said that one's reading of other religious texts will not in any way distort one's own religious beliefs. On the other hand, the reading of other religious texts will make one understand better one's own religion. Gandhi held that his respectful study of other religions had not abated his reverence for the Hindu scriptures. They had indeed left their deep impression upon his understanding of the Hindu scriptures. They had broadened his view of life and had enabled him to understand more clearly many obscure passages in the Hindu scriptures.

Referring to Swadeshi as a *dharma*, Gandhi held that "Khadi is the first indispensable step towards the discharge of Swadeshi dharma to society."²² By practising Swadeshi, Gandhi advanced the view that innumerable people that depend upon hand-woven cloth will be fed and sheltered. As a part of his Swadeshi movement, Gandhi preferred small-scale industries to

large-scale industries. Gandhi's concern was for the weakest of the weak in the society and to establish a Sarvodaya state. With this objective, he considered Swadeshi as a *dharma*.

Removal of untouchability is also Sadharana-dharma for Gandhi. He says that the notion of untouchability is the result of the misconception that one caste is either inferior or superior to another. This is clearly a confused view because "none can be born untouchable, as all are sparks of one and the same fire."²³ Untouchability, says Gandhi, is a plague which one should eradicate as a part of one's duty. Removal of untouchability implies love for, and service of, the whole world. It merges into ahimsa, and breaks down the barriers between man and man.²⁴ Gandhi conceives removal of untouchability as a dharma in view of his social conditions and needs. Gandhi is for a Sarvodaya state, where all men are to be treated equally. Under these circumstances, no one is either inferior or superior to the other.

SO FAR WE have discussed Gandhi's views on Sadharana dharmas. What about his conception of *Varnasrama dharmas*?

Gandhi's interpretation of *varnadharma* is not based on birth, but is based on worth (profession). He remarks: "Varna has nothing to do with caste."²⁵ He proclaims that unfortunately the term varna is confused with caste and it degrades the very spirit of varna dharma. Gandhi believes that the four varnas (*Brahmana*, *ksatriya*, *vasya* and *sudra*) are the "four ways of earning one's livelihood." He observes that all men are born equal, however they differ in their qualities. The qualities are inborn and inherited from their parentage. "Just as everyone inherits a particular form, so does he inherits the particular characteristics and qualities of his progenitors, . . ."²⁶

Therefore Gandhi suggested that it is appropriate and convenient to follow the profession of one's parentage. He went to the extent of accusing that one's choosing some other's profession is a kind of stealing. He thus remarks: "A hundred years ago, a carpenter's son never wanted to become a lawyer. Today he does, because he finds the profession the easiest way to steal money."²⁷ When Gandhi was asked about a Sudra taking up the profession of a brahmin, he remarked: "He may not be called a brahmana in this birth. And it is a good thing for him not to arrogate a varna to which he is not born. It is a sign of true humility."²⁸

These passages indicate that Gandhi wanted people to follow the profession of their parentage. How are Gandhi's views tenable? It appears to me that they are not practicable. How many Kshatriyas are in the army now? How many vaisyas are taking up the profession of business? Therefore Gandhi's ideas on this issue may not be agreeable. However, there is one merit in Gandhi's interpretation of varna dharma. He considered it as a *dharma* about division of labour in society. He never interpreted it on the basis of birth. He repeatedly states that by varna he does not mean caste,

but profession. At the same time, he proclaimed that all professions are equal and no one is either superior or inferior to the other. Gandhi was also aware of the fact that varna-dharma led to certain undesirable results like untouchability which he protested vehemently. Then the question that arises is: Why did not Gandhi leave varna dharma at all. The truth is that he was under the spell of the Gita where varna dharma was substantiated. The Gita talks of varna according to *guna* and *karma*. In the same way, Gandhi also interpreted varna on the basis of one's qualities and profession.

Finally, about Gandhi's interpretation of asrama-dharmas. We have already noted his views on brahmacharya. Referring to *grhastha dharmia*, Gandhi observes that one should embrace it for bringing forth progeny, "And the union is a crime when the desire for progeny is absent."²⁸ Upon *Vanaprastha*, and *Sannyasa* dharmas, Gandhi has reacted novelly. In the Indian philosophical tradition these are explained as the stages where the individual has to be disentangled from his social bonds and resort to a secluded life in forests. Manu says that when a person sees his grandchild or when his hair turns grey, it is the time for him to go to forests as a Vanaprastha. This is *nivritti marga*. On the other hand, Gandhi expounded vanaprastha and sanyasa dharmas through *pravritti marga*. For him, vanaprastha and sannyasa do not consist by resorting to forests but by very much living in society and doing selfless service with a detached outlook (*anasakthi yoga*). To put it in the words of Gandhi, renunciation "does not mean abandoning the world and retiring into the forest. The spirit of renunciation should rule all the activities of life."²⁹ Thus Gandhi gave a new definition of Vanaprastha and Sannyasa asrama dharmas.

To conclude our discussions, *dharmia* is the basis of our living. Unless one's behaviour and livelihood are within the framework of *dharmia*, one can neither lead a fruitful and happy life nor let others live happily and peacefully in a society. Indian philosophical tradition has therefore considered it as the core purusartha. In the contemporary times, Gandhi's interpretation of this doctrine has thrown enough light for our understanding on this subject. Gandhi's philosophical ideas on dharma are very much relevant to our present day and age. The present scenario is gloomy. We are witnessing the horrors of violence and blood shed. Gun-culture is replaced by bomb culture, moral values are receding gradually. The superiority of one varna over the other and the notion of untouchability, are still existing in some degree or the other. Bread labour is rarely perceived, craze for *videshi* and ignorance of *Swadeshi* are persisting, religious tolerance and inter-religious understanding are not yet reached as desired. Under these circumstances it is beyond doubt that Gandhi's analysis and interpretation of *dharmia* are very relevant to our present age and society.

Notes and References

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Himsa and Ahimsa

R.K. Gupta

THERE ARE ACTS, like being abusive or lynching, which are hurt- or death-causing by their very nature. Likewise, there are acts, like being loving or affectionate or providing nourishment, which are comfort-causing or life-promoting by their very nature. Further, there are acts, like being quiet, which are not hurt- or death-causing by their very nature, but which may be performed with the intention of causing hurt or death. In the same manner, there are acts, like again just being quiet, which are not comfort-causing or life-promoting by their very nature, but which may be performed with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life. Now, I define a violent act as one, which is hurt- or death-causing by its very nature; or, as one, which is not hurt- or death-causing by its very nature, but which is performed with the intention of causing hurt or death. And I define a nonviolent act as one which is comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature; or, as one, which is not comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature, but which is performed with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life.

The definitions of violent and nonviolent acts, which I have given above, are definitions of these acts in the positive sense. In the negative sense, a violent act consists in not performing or refraining from performing an act, which is comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature; or not performing or refraining from performing an act, which is not comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature, with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life. Again, in the negative sense, a nonviolent act consists in not performing or refraining from performing an act, which is hurt- or death-causing by its very nature; or not performing or refraining from performing an act which is not hurt- or death-causing by its very nature, with the intention of causing hurt or death. This means to say that, in the negative sense: a violent act is the contradictory of a nonviolent act in the positive sense; and a nonviolent act is the contradictory of a violent act in the positive sense.

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I have given above two examples of acts which are hurt- or death-causing by their very nature, namely being abusive or lynching; and two examples of acts which are comfort-causing or life-promoting by their very nature, namely being loving or affectionate or providing nourishment. Let me mention here some more examples of acts of the former kind, and some more examples of acts of the latter kind. Those of the former kind would include, besides being abusive or lynching, scolding, beating, slapping, assaulting, harassing, molesting, raping, torturing, insulting, thinking ill of somebody with that person's knowledge, withdrawing help when that help is still needed and not doing what one is required to do to help somebody. Those of the latter kind would include, besides being loving or affectionate or providing nourishment, being respectful, being accommodating, showing appreciation for somebody's work or attainments, showing humility, exercising tolerance, giving a patient hearing, making efforts to understand somebody, saving somebody from danger, helping somebody in need and taking an interest in and working for somebody's welfare. I will not define at present each of the these acts to show how the one's belonging to the former set are hurt- or death-causing by their very nature, and how the one's belonging to the latter set are comfort-causing or life-promoting by their very nature. I will define only three from the former set, namely being abusive, slapping and molesting; and only three from the latter set, namely being loving or affectionate, being accommodating and giving a patient hearing.

Being abusive is using a word or set of words in speech or writing, comparing a person or persons with something such that they find this comparison below their dignity, their true position, and consequently hurtful, for instance, calling a person or persons barbarians or as no better than mules.

Slapping is giving a blow with the palm of one's hand, generally on the face, hard enough to cause hurt.

Molesting is forcibly interfering with another person in a sexual way, so that as being this interference it is hurtful.

Being loving or affectionate is an act of coming closer and caring in which people to whom one comes closer and for whom one cares find comfort.

Being accommodating is being willing to help or adjust, which means being willing to provide for a person's convenience, and this involves causing him comfort.

Giving a patient hearing is giving a hearing to a person to his utmost satisfaction, which involves causing him comfort.¹

GANDHI DEFINES *HIMSA* (violence) as causing pain to, or killing, a living being out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so.

I would like to make two comments about this definition.

Firstly, only one part of this definition, namely that relating to killing, would apply to all living beings. The part of this definition relating to causing pain would apply only to those living beings who are also feeling beings. As a result, Gandhi's definition, somewhat more explicitly speaking, would be expressed as follows: *himsa* is (i) killing a living being out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so; and (ii) causing pain to, or killing, a living being who is also a feeling being out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so. Or, does Gandhi, in his definition, mean by a living being the same thing as a feeling being, that is, a living being who is also a feeling being? Arbitrarily speaking, for the time being, I take Gandhi to mean this.

Secondly, it is clear that Gandhi's definition of *himsa* which I have given above has the implication, that if one killed, or caused pain to, a living being, but not out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or without the intention of doing so, then that is not *himsa*.

Gandhi distinguishes various forms of *himsa*, in the sense of causing pain to, or killing, a living being.

(i) *Himsa* which is not immoral or, as one may possibly say, which is morally pardonable or excusable. This includes: (a) *himsa* which is in self-interest, but which is unavoidable; and (b) *himsa* which is resorted to as an alternative to cowardice, and which Gandhi calls the *himsa* of the brave, or defensive *himsa*, or *himsa* which is almost *ahimsa*.

"We do destroy as much life as we think is necessary for sustaining the body. Thus for food we take life, vegetable and other, and for health we destroy mosquitoes, and the like by disinfectants etc. and we do not think that we are guilty of irreligion in doing so."²

"I do believe that, where there is only a choice between cowardice and violence, I would advise violence. Thus when my eldest son asked me what he should have done, had he been present when I was almost fatally assaulted in 1908, whether he should have used his physical force which he could and wanted to use, and defended me, I told him that it was his duty to defend me even by using violence."³

"If a man fights with his sword single-handed against a horde of dacoits, armed to the teeth, I should say that he is fighting almost nonviolently. Have I not said to our women that if, in defence of their honour, they used their nails and teeth and even a dagger, I should regard their conduct nonviolent. She does not know the distinction between *himsa* and *ahimsa*. She acts spontaneously. Supposing, a mouse, in fighting a cat, tried to resist the cat with his sharp beak, would you call that mouse violent? In the same way, for the Poles to stand violently against the German hordes, vastly superior in numbers and military equipment and strength, was almost nonviolence."⁴

(ii) *Himsa* which is *ahimsa*, or which is morally justifiable. This includes *himsa* which is resorted to in the interest of others, but again, which is unavoidable.

"... for the sake of others, that is, for the benefit of the species we kill carnivorous beasts. When lions and tigers pester their villages, the villagers regard it a duty to kill them or have them killed.

"Even manslaughter may be necessary in certain cases. Suppose a man runs amuck and goes furiously about sword in hand, killing any one that comes his way, and no one dares to capture him alive. Any one who dispatches this lunatic will earn the gratitude of the community and be regarded as benevolent man."⁵

"Nonviolence sometimes calls upon us to put an end to the life of a living being. For instance a calf in the Ashram dairy was lame and had developed terrible sores; it could not eat and breathed with difficulty. After three days' argument with myself and co-workers, I had poison injected into its body and thus put an end to its life. That action was nonviolent, because it was wholly unselfish inasmuch as the sole purpose was to achieve the calf's relief from pain. It was a surgical operation, and I should do exactly the same thing with my child, if he were in the same predicament."⁶

(iii) *Himsa* which is immoral. This includes (a) *himsa* which is resorted to in self-interest, or not in self-interest, but which is avoidable; and (b) *himsa* which is resorted to against the weak, which Gandhi calls the *himsa* of the coward.

"If I save the food I eat or the clothes which I wear or the space I occupy, it is obvious that these can be utilized by someone else whose need is greater than mine. As my selfishness prevents him from using these things, my physical enjoyment involves violence to my poorer neighbour."⁷

"But what about our being angry with one another? A teacher inflicting corporal punishment on his pupils, a mother taking her children to task, a man losing his temper in his intercourse with equals, all these are guilty of violence, and violence of a bad type."⁸

"The violence we see today is the violence of the cowards. There is also such a thing as violence of the brave. If four or five men enter into a fight and die by the sword, there is violence in it but it is the violence of the brave. But when ten thousand armed men attack a village of unarmed people and slaughter them along with their wives and children it is the violence of cowards. America unleashed its atom bomb over Japan. This was the violence of the cowards."⁹

Gandhi includes under (iii) above another form of *himsa*. This consists in refraining from causing injury to, or killing, a living being in its interest, but which is unavoidable; that is, which consists in refraining from resorting to *himsa* which is *ahimsa*, or which is morally justifiable.

The physician who prescribes bitter medicines causes you pain but does no *himsa*. If he fails to prescribe bitter medicines when it is necessary to do so, he fails in his duty of *ahimsa*. The surgeon who, from fear of causing pain to his patient, hesitates to amputate a rotten limb is guilty of *himsa*. He who refrains from killing a murderer who is about to kill his ward (when he cannot prevent

him otherwise) earns no merit, but commits a sin, he practises no *ahimsa* but *himsa* out of a fatuous sense of *ahimsa*.¹⁰

Gandhi defines *ahimsa* (nonviolence) both negatively and positively. (i) Negatively, he defines it as not causing pain to, or not killing, a living being in thought, word or deed directly, as distinguished from indirectly. (ii) Positively, he defines it as acting out of love (or benevolence or compassion or charity or good will) towards a living being. This would include: (a) even causing pain to, or killing, a living being, but not out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so, but out of love; and (b) being prepared to suffer in one's own person, rather than causing pain to, or killing, another living being, out of love. In connection with (ii) (a) here, I have mentioned above Gandhi's statement about the physician, who prescribes bitter medicines; the surgeon, who amputates a rotten limb; and the person who kills a murderer; all of them doing what they do out of love. In connection with (ii) (b) here, let me mention the following statement from Gandhi:

"I have suggested in these columns that woman is the incarnation of *Ahimsa*. *Ahimsa* means infinite love, which again means infinite capacity for suffering. Who, but woman, the mother of men, shows this capacity in the largest measure? She shows it as she carries the infant and feeds it during nine months and derives joy in the suffering involved. What can beat the suffering caused by the pangs of labour? But she forgets them in the joy of creation. Who again suffers daily so that her babe may wax from day to day?

"My good nurse in the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, as I was lying on a sickbed years ago, told me the story of a woman who refused to take chloroform because she would not risk the life of the babe she was carrying. She had to undergo a painful operation. The only anaesthetic she had was her love for the babe, to save whom no suffering was too great."¹¹

Gandhi distinguishes two forms of *ahimsa*, *ahimsa* of the weak and *ahimsa* of the strong. In the former case, one adopts *ahimsa* as a matter of policy or expedience, because one is not properly equipped to use *himsa*. In this case, one would be nonviolent in deed and possibly also in word, but not in thought. In the latter case, one adopts *ahimsa*, in the sense of *ahimsa* in thought, word and deed, as a matter of principle or creed, so that one would be nonviolent in this sense under all circumstances, even under the circumstance of being properly equipped to use *himsa*.¹²

IN THE FIRST part of this paper, I have stated my thesis about the nature of violent and nonviolent acts. In the second part, I have stated Gandhi's thesis about the nature of violence and nonviolence, and also his classification of these. In this third part, I wish to make two observations about the latter's thesis about the nature of violence and nonviolence.

Observation one. Distinction should be made between the question of the nature of violence and nonviolence and that of their moral characterization. Gandhi himself makes that distinction in his classification of different forms of violence. There he clearly has before his mind his conception of violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being; and then he mentions the conditions of its moral characterization: the conditions under which it is not immoral, those under which it is moral and those under which it is immoral. Gandhi also makes that distinction in his definition of nonviolence in the negative sense and nonviolence in the positive sense, where he leaves out the question of their moral characterization altogether. However, when he defines violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being out of anger, or fear, or selfishness, or with the intention of doing so, he clearly puts into his definition of violence also the conditions of its moral characterization. Here he clearly identifies violence with violence which he would consider immoral. But the two things can be easily detached from one another: his conception of violence as causing pain to, or killing, a living being, and the conditions of its moral characterization.

Let me state here in one place Gandhi's definitions of violence and nonviolence without their moral characterization. Violence, in the positive sense, is causing pain to, or killing, a living being. Nonviolence, in the positive sense, is acting out of love towards a living being. As I have stated it in the second part of this paper, nonviolence, in the negative sense, is not causing pain to, or not killing, a living being in thought, word or deed directly, as distinguished from indirectly. We can easily construct his definition of violence, in the negative sense, as not acting out of love towards a living being. It may be pointed out that the words "in thought, word or deed directly, as distinguished from indirectly," which are incorporated here in the definition of nonviolence, in the negative sense, Gandhi would indeed approve of their incorporation in all other definitions as well.

Observation two. We have just seen that Gandhi defines violence, in the positive sense, as causing pain to, or killing, a living being. I find that causing pain to, or killing a living being consists in performing one or the other of two kinds of acts. It consists in performing an act which is pain- or death-causing by its very nature; or an act, which is not pain- or death-causing by its very nature, with the intention of causing pain or death. As a result, we can formulate Gandhi's definition of violence, in the positive sense, in a more explicit form by including in it these two kinds of acts. We have also seen above that Gandhi defines nonviolence, in the positive sense, as acting out of love towards a living being. I again find that acting out of love towards a living being consists in performing one or the other of two kinds of acts. It consists in performing an act which is comfort causing or life-promoting by its very nature; or an act, which is not comfort-causing or life-promoting by its very nature, with the intention of causing comfort or promoting life. As a result, we can once more formulate Gandhi's

definition of nonviolence in the positive sense, in a more explicit form by including in it these two kinds of acts. We find that Gandhi's definition of violence, in the negative sense, as not acting out of love towards a living being, is contradictory of his definition of nonviolence, in the positive sense, as acting out of love towards a living being. And his definition of nonviolence, in the negative sense, as not causing pain to, or killing, a living being, is contradictory of his definition of violence, in the positive sense, as causing pain to, or killing, a living being. As a result, we obtain the more explicit formulation of his definition of violence, in the negative sense, as the contradictory of the more explicit formulation of his definition of nonviolence, in the positive sense. And we obtain the more explicit formulation of his definition of nonviolence, in the negative sense, as the contradictory of the more explicit formulation of his definition of violence, in the positive sense.

It will be immediately seen here that the more explicit formulations of Gandhi's definitions of violence and nonviolence which I have given above, are exactly the same as the definitions of violent and nonviolent acts which I have given in the first part of this paper.

Notes and References

1. (i) Take, for example, the case of being abusive. It may be objected that there are circumstances, as in theatre or under some other form of pretence, when being abusive is not hurt-causing. However, the question here is whether, under the given circumstances, being abusive is *really* being abusive. Is it not then simply a case of acting or simulating being abusive? I have little reason to doubt that this will be admitted to be so.
 (ii) For what I have said in this section, also see my paper, "Defining Violent and Nonviolent Acts," *Journal of Indian Council of Philosophical Research*, Vol. 9, No. 3, May-August 1992.
2. V.V. Ramana Murti, ed., *Gandhi: Essential Writings* (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1970), p. 170.
3. M.K. Gandhi, *Nonviolence in Peace and War* (Ahmedabad: Navajivan Publishing House, 1961), Vol. 1, p. 3.
4. D.G. Tendulkar, *Mahatma: Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi* (New Delhi: Publications Division, Government of India, 1990), Vol. 5, 1990 reprint, p. 312.
5. V.V. Ramana Murti, ed., *Gandhi: Essential Writings*, (New Delhi: Gandhi Peace Foundation, 1970), p. 170.
6. Raghavan Iyer, ed., *The Moral and Political Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986), Vol. 2, p. 580.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 578.
8. *Ibid.*

Can the Civilisational Crisis be Averted?

THE CRUSADE AGAINST terrorism which is being witnessed the world over has taken a new dimension. The Islamic world has become united in its fight against American imperialism and has tended to equate Christianity with the USA and Europe. In fact, the Islamic fundamentalists have called for a united struggle against the First World, represented by the UK and the United States and fight their domination and sovereignty in the international sphere.

The division of the world into the Christian and Islamic civilisations, as though there is nothing in between, is indeed more fanciful and frivolous than the arbitrary division of the world into two blocs led by superpowers. The plausibility of the contrived "civilisational conflict hypothesis" of Samuel Huntington depends wholly on human suggestibility. Taking refuge under this hypothesis, the fundamentalists feel that since the Christian world wants to destroy their religion and culture, they have a moral responsibility to retaliate.

As the United States and its allies got bogged down and consequently continue severe punitive bombardments leading to increasing civilian casualties in Afghanistan, the idea of a civilisational conflict might look more and more credible and compelling to the Muslim world. This could have unimaginable consequences having far-reaching implications.

Over a period of time, the Euro-American bloc of nations has projected its agenda and interests as the global agenda. At the core of this ethnocentrism has been the dogma of inherent superiority of Western culture over all other cultures. Western culture, based on materialistic power and consumerism, has helped in solving problems of the people of that world. The power that has generated from financial and political strength has given President Bush the courage to conceive that the Taliban can be quickly bombed into submission and that the menace of global terrorism can be rooted out at will. In fact, the blind faith of Western

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culture in the omnipotence of technology alone should suffice to prove that the religion of the West is not Christianity but materialism.

Alternatively, in a recent interview, Osama bin Laden has justified his 11 September attack on the United States by asserting that "if an enemy occupies a Muslim territory and uses common people as human shields, then it is permitted to attack the enemy." Elaborating, Osama pointed out: "America and its allies are killing us [Muslims] in Palestine, Chechnya, Kashmir, and Iraq. The Muslims have the right to attack in reprisal. The attacks were not targeted at women and children. The real targets were America's icons of military and economic power." Osama has called the Americans to give up their anti-Muslim policies and stop the massacre of Muslims by their government.

It would be pertinent here to delve into the religious interpretation and find whether there is either any justification of the growing terrorist activities by Islamic fundamentalists or the continued bombing and killing innocents by America and its allies. Examining the Islamic position, Sheikh Sa'id Ramadan Al-Bouti has pointed out: "We Muslims subject our personal interests of our humanness, whereas they (meaning American and the first world) subject their humanness to the needs of their personal interests. Everytime the humanness of these countries contradicts a certain personal interest, they excuse themselves by saying that it is not in the nation's interest. It is as if they are saying, "Our personal interest dictates that innocent men and women should be killed and that we turn a blind eye to what afflicts thousands in the Orient and in the Occident, whether in Palestine or not in Palestine."

It is generally agreed by scholars that Islam was a revolutionary religion of equality, justice, and peace rejecting inequity and idolatry. In Islamic law, terrorism (*hirabah*) is considered cowardly, predatory, and a grand sin punishable by death. Classical Islamic law explicitly prohibits the taking or slaying of hostages or diplomats even in retaliation against unlawful acts by the enemy. Furthermore, it prohibits stealth or indiscriminate attacks against enemies, Muslim or non-Muslim. One can say that classical jurists considered such acts to be contrary to the ethics of Arab chivalry and therefor fundamentally cowardly.

Islam includes a lot more material in its most classic, basic sources that are militant because that is the world they lived in—a world of successful military campaigns," said Dr Reuven Firestone, a professor of medieval Judaism and Islam at Hebrew Union College in Los Angeles. But experts unanimously agreed that terrorists broke every rule enshrined in the Islamic sacred books. The tradition expressly prohibits the killing of innocents: women, children, the aged, the hermits, even trees. Columbia University Chairman of the Middle Eastern Languages and Culture, Professor Hamid Dabashi, rightly concludes that examining religion as a factor in terrorism is a red herring since extremists are waging a political struggle against the perceived effects of colonialism and simply veiling the effort in the language of God.

One must also mention how and whether the traditional conservative Christian theologians support the American killing of innocents in Afghanistan. There is no place in Christianity for retaliation but the Christian theologians have never spoken against American bombing and war, whether in Vietnam, or against the Palestinians, or presently against Afghanistan.

If one were to perceive a civilisational conflict in the near future, it will not be between Islam and Christianity but between the civilisations of materialism and spirituality, between the proponents of material and technical progress and those who do not believe in it. No doubt, terrorism and violence belong to the culture of materialism. Terrorism has no religion and a terrorist for his violent activities cannot take refuge under any religion. Nor does an anti-terror front become Christian (or anti-Islamic) because its leaders are from the Christian community. Those who put their whole trust in violence and might cannot claim to be truly Christian or Muslim.

The world stands at a critical juncture today with the two largest communities of the world up in arms against each other. This is a time for honest and objective thinking and not partial truths and partisan advocacies. It would not be out of place to point out that the United Nations has virtually failed in its role to prevent hostilities and promote world peace. The world body has indeed been a dumb spectator to increasing conflicts the world over and has never dared to go against the interests and the agenda of the First World, led by the USA.

If hatred and animosity is allowed to develop, the concept of one world (of globalisation) cannot really become a reality. While the Muslim world needs to become really educated and also acquainted with a proper interpretation of their religion, the Christian community, which is rich and powerful, should understand the problems of the Third World and not always force their own agenda and policies on the latter. There is need at this juncture for cooperation and understanding and a proper interpretation of the religions of the world and their usefulness in modern-day society. But the onus lies more on the powerful West to stop their exploitation and come forward with a helping hand of goodwill and peace.

The materialist society is taking human beings to the path of destruction, as rightly pointed out by Mahatma Gandhi long back. There is need for a new orientation to life and living for which proper interpretation and understanding of the scriptures are needed. Simultaneously, as the message of all religions is for the rich to help the poor and the helpless, this has to be taken note of by the Western world who should lend a helping hand to the nations of the Third World so that they could fight poverty and hunger. The hypothesis of a civilisational clash, as predicted by Huntington, may have become a reality in a sense but there is need to avert a greater crisis through dialogue and understanding. Gandhi's message of peace and religious unity is greatly relevant today to avert the crisis.

DHURJATI MUKHERJEE

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Gandhian Philosophy of Development

ADAM SMITH ADVOCATED "self-interest" for attaining economic development. Karl Marx criticised this approach and he replaced self-interest with social interest. But Gandhi integrated these two approaches and argued that a social self-interest is the right attitude for attaining economic development. Thus he elevated economics from a mere material plane to a spiritual plane and directly related the science of economics to the science of life.

Individual Development

According to Gandhi, it is through the refinement of individuality that a healthy social set-up is born. By the refinement of individuality, he meant changing life into a pursuit of truth, through the twin paths of "aparigraha" and "ahimsa." He says: "Man's happiness really lies in contentment. He who is discontented, however he much possesses, becomes a slave to his desires. All the sages have declared from the housetops that man can be his own worst enemy as well as his best friend. And what is true for individual is true for society."

Self-contentment and the consequent simple living can curtail the multiplication of wants of human beings. Multiplication of the material wants is the root cause of exploitation. Therefore an individual has to grow above the material plane of knowledge and experience and reach a higher level of spiritual plane. Gandhi believed that spirituality should be reflected in the day-to-day affairs of an individual and hence it encompasses the social, political, and economic fields.

The spiritual dimensions of life forces one to see a relationship between man and nature. This sense of harmony along with self-contentment minimises the attitude of exploitation of nature and fellow living beings. Minimisation of exploitation and maximisation of happiness is the essence of Gandhian philosophy of development. This can be realised only when the principles of "aparigraha" and "ahimsa" are practised by the individuals in a society.

Gandhi preferred to call the poor "Narayana." Gandhi considered them equal to God, or to make it clear, the poor man is the manifestation of God. Hence, if we, as individuals love God, it is our duty to help these poor people and uplift them.

National Development

As a nation, Gandhi recognised the twin problems of India—poverty and

unemployment. He believed that "for the poor, God is in the form of food." We know that unemployment is the cause of poverty. According to him, "unemployment breeds physical, mental, and spiritual starvation."

The important solution for the problem of unemployment, according to Gandhi, is "production by masses" and not mass production. Machinery-oriented mass production cannot solve the unemployment problem of Indians. Gandhi says: "I am not fighting machinery as such but the madness of thinking that machinery saves labour. Men 'save labour' until thousands of them are without work and die of hunger on the streets. I want to secure employment and livelihood not only for a part of human race but for all. At present, the machine is helping a small minority to live on the exploitation of the masses. The motive force of this minority is not humanity and love of their kind, but greed and avarice."

In place of large-scale mechanised production he advocated the use of small machines, and promotion of Khadi and village industry, which are the auspicious symbols of "sharir yojana"—body labour. "If we substitute lifeless machines for living machines, we would be violating the law of God that the body must be fully worked and utilised. He who eats his food without offering this sacrifice steals it. By giving up this sacrifice, we become traitors to the country and bang the door with the face of Goddess of Fortune."

Gandhi preferred "*Kuchcha house*" to "*pucca buildings*," as the former would generate employment for more people. As he was convinced that India lives in its villages, his programmes of Sarvodaya, gram swaraj, and swadeshi were aimed at the upliftment of the rural folk. It is only after having solved the basic problems of food, clothing, and shelter that we should try to seek comforts and luxuries. But when we accept a global outlook on the problems, even comforts and luxuries are not deserved by human beings.

Gandhi and Sustainable Development

Right from the 1972 Stockholm Conference (UN Conference on Human Environment), modern scientists and planners have been aware of the delicacies involved in the development of nations. "During the decade since then we have gradually come to appreciate the extra ordinary interdependence and fragility of that tiny part of our planet in which life is possible. A few thin meters of soil, a few miles upto the sky, and a similar depth down into oceans encompass virtually the whole of the biosphere in which we and other living things can survive."

The basic and indestructible links between human needs and limited resources have been understood in the Brundtland Report.

After the publication of this report, protecting environment and promoting development became the central and focal point in development economics. Since then, the Rio Conference also gave equal importance to the concept of sustainable development.

"Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." In clear terms, we have no right to lay our hand on the resources reserved for the future generations. In other words, in this world of limited resources, multiplication of wants will ultimately lead to the early depletion of resources. This concept becomes clearer when we pay heed to Gandhi's words that this world has got enough to satisfy everyone's need, but not everyone's greed.

Moreover, this new concept of sustainable development involves new dimensions such as philosophical, ethical, and moral aspects. So far we have regarded economic development as a mere platform on the material plane. But now it is a new platform extending over the moral, ethical, and spiritual landscapes. Gandhi's integrated approach to development included the spiritual and moral side also. He emphasised the moral aspects, hard manual work for one and all, simplicity as a way of life, self-reliance, and, above all, total development of man in the context of the overall development of which he is a part. This means that most modern development thinking and Gandhian views about development are crossing the same bridge.

Every branch of science is an incessant pursuit of truth, though the paths may be different. Gandhi also was very curious to know the truth. His life was an experiment to seek the truth. Therefore it is not surprising that most modern economists of "Development Economics" and Mahatma Gandhi meet at the same point of sustainable development, though scientists follow different paths but reach the same goal.

T.V. MURALI VALLABHAN

Judiciary and Gandhi's Views on Simplifying the Legal Procedure

Introduction

ONE OF THE important organs of the modern State is the judiciary. Although the other organs seem to be in a state of turmoil and disrepute, the judiciary has been active and performing its duties with a sense of purpose and determination.

In many recent cases, the judiciary has broken new ground and interpreted the law in a most imaginative and constructive manner for the benefit of the common people. For example, in the *Shah Banu* (Mohammad Ahmed vs. Shah Banu, AIR 1985, Sc 945) case, the Supreme Court ruled

that a Muslim male has the legal responsibility to provide for the maintenance support of the woman he divorces. It is another matter that Rajiv Gandhi's government, fearing a Muslim backlash, rushed the Muslim Women Protection of Rights Act through Parliament in 1986, effectively nullifying the decision of the Court providing for maintenance of divorced Muslim women.

In another case, the Supreme Court ruling in the *Unnikrishnan vs. the State of Andhra Pradesh* (see *the Supreme Court Cases*, Eastern Book Company, New Delhi, 1993, Vol. 1) case in 1993 has effectively interpreted the provision of Article 45, which is a directive principle in the Constitution as a fundamental right—that the government must provide for free and compulsory education to all children up to the age of 14. The ruling unambiguously stated that “the citizens of this country have a fundamental right to education. The said right flows from Article 21 . . . every child/citizen of this country has a right to free education until he completes the age of 14 years. . . .” This ruling has given impetus to the efforts of the government to universalise education (see Ravi P. Bhatia, “Development of Education as a Fundamental Right,” *Gandhi Marg*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January-March 2001).

The Apex Court has also been moving with the times and has been considering cases in areas relevant to the changing socio-economic scenario. For example, in the recent case of starvation deaths, while food was rotting in the godowns, it was the landmark orders passed by the Court that made the Union and the State governments sit up and take action to alleviate the problem of these starving people. In this regard the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, Justice A.S. Anand, has recently written:

The judiciary has been rendering judgements which are in tune and temper with the legislative intent while keeping pace with time and jealously protecting and developing the dimensions of the fundamental human rights of the citizens so as to make them meaningful and realistic. . . . (see A.S. Anand, “Judicial Review, Judicial Activism—Need for Caution,” *Journal of Indian Law Institute*, Vol. 42, April-December 2000).

Public Interest Litigation

A powerful instrument developed by the Supreme Court has been the Public Interest Litigation (PIL). The Court has ruled that those petitioners who are unable to approach the Court for enforcement of their fundamental rights, because of poverty or otherwise, may make use of the PIL to seek judicial redress. The PIL has often been used in areas of public interest—the latest example being the PIL against the appointment of Jayalalitha as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. The Court in its historic judgement (see S.P. Sathe, “Supreme Court, Jayalalitha and Crisis Management Public Gap,” *Economic and Political Weekly*, Vol. 36, No. 39, p. 3659) ruled that her appointment was unconstitutional and void because of which Jayalalitha had to resign.

However, the Supreme Court is aware of the pitfalls of excessive use of PIL for purposes other than for the benefit of weaker segments of the society. Justice Anand has very aptly stated:

Care has to be taken to see that the PIL essentially remains Public Interest Litigation and does not become Political Interest Litigation or Personal Interest Litigation or Publicity Interest Litigation. If that happens PIL would lose its legitimacy and the credibility of Courts would suffer . . . (A.S. Anand, "Judicial Review, Judicial Activism: Need for Caution").

Some scholars have expressed the concern that the judiciary is entering into those areas that are strictly speaking in the realm of the executive: fixing the height of the Sardar Sarovar dam or in the displacement of polluting industries from out of Delhi. By making use of the enlarged interpretation of the role of PIL, the judiciary, and in particular the Supreme Court, has been criticized for its judicial activism. The criticism is directed against its proactive role which has allegedly led to it usurping the functions of the legislature and the executive. Reacting to this criticism, Justice Anand has written:

Judicial activism in India encompasses an area of legislative vacuum in the field of human rights. Judicial activism reinforces the strength of democracy and reaffirms the faith of the common man in the rule of law . . . (*ibid.*).

In the absence of suitable laws, the judiciary cannot by itself ensure that the basic features enshrined in the Constitution for the good of the common people are implemented uniformly and equitably. For example, in the promotion of welfare of people [Article 38(1)], minimizing the inequalities of income and of status, facilities, and opportunities [Article 38(2)], raising levels of nutrition and standard of living and improvement of public health (Article 47) etc. the implementation of the constitutional provisions is seen to be unsatisfactory.

Unfortunately, while the judiciary has been more than active in certain cases, there is a large degree of misuse of the legal process to thwart the course of justice. There is an unmistakable indication that the legal process is being manipulated to prevent justice in certain well-known cases where the rich and the mighty are involved, as, for instance, in the *Jessical Lal* murder case or in the earlier *BMW* hit-and-run case.

Delays in Judicial Process

The legal process also leads to prolonged litigation and delays in getting justice. According to some estimates, there is a backlog of more than three crore cases pending in various courts all over the country. The delays result in ordinary people losing faith in the judiciary and may lead them to take the law in their own hands and to resort to extra-judicial measures for seeking justice. Sometime back, the Union minister for Law, Justice, and Company Affairs, Mr Arun Jaitley, had admitted to about 3.4 million

pending cases in the High Courts and 21,600 cases in the Supreme Court at the end of the year 2000. Often the delays arise because the judges, especially in the lower courts, readily agree to the adjournment of proceedings.

Part of the problem is the shortage of judges, but, as Mr Jaitley himself has admitted, merely appointing additional judges will not be enough. Court procedures need to be simplified and Mr Jaitley has suggested amendments to the Civil Procedure Code (CrPC) and other measures to expedite the disposal of cases. Perhaps another innovation like the PIL would need to be discovered to provide justice for the common man. The state of Rajasthan has established fast track courts for expediting the pending court cases. Forty of these courts have already been established for dealing with criminal cases and a similar number of courts for considering civil cases are to be established in the near future (*The Hindu*, 11 September 2001).

Gandhi's Views on the Judicial System

In this context, it is relevant to remember Gandhi's views on the legal procedure. Since he had himself been trained as a lawyer, he was aware of its basic problems. He felt that it was an expensive procedure, led to unnecessary delays, and was bureaucratic. It also failed to treat human beings with dignity and considered them only as litigants or as objects in the system and there was little realisation of the human suffering that delays lead to. In other words, it was basically not sympathetic to the people, especially the poor, who felt ill at ease in the legal chambers and could ill afford hiring of expensive lawyers.

Writing in his *Hind Swaraj* (see M.K. Gandhi, *Hind Swaraj*, Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad, 1994, ninth reprint), Gandhi thought: "Lawyers were lazy people and take up this profession in order to indulge in luxuries." He also felt that they had tightened the English grip on India and that "it would not be possible for the English to carry on their government without law courts. . . ." Being a lawyer himself, Gandhi's views on the profession at first sight seems puzzling. But these views are consistent with his overall philosophy behind his actions.

Gandhi felt that the process should be decentralised and simplified. He also advocated a basically new system in which the people affected would resolve their disputes themselves quickly and without being intimidated by the formal structure of the courts and the legal process. This would also help create a conducive climate which would avoid bitterness and ill-will. Only when the conflicts were of more serious nature and could not be resolved in this informal way should local courts be set up. These would consist of men and women of integrity and enjoying people's trust and confidence and would be asked to settle these disputes. This way not only would the disputes be settled expeditiously—possibly in one or most two "sittings" but would also lead to permanent resolution of the basic cause of the conflict.

Gandhi was firmly of the view that courts should not merely administer justice, but "should evolve more sensitive and individualised notions of justice by creatively interpreting the law in the light of prevailing principles of social morality, natural justice, and commonsense" (see Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi*, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 1997). The aim would be not to apportion blame and "punish the guilty" but to "restore the ruptured fabric of society, foster the spirit of goodwill and fairplay, and increase the affected parties' capacity to live together harmoniously." Such a system of legal justice would have the advantages of being swift, inexpensive, easily intelligible, and dispensed without an elaborate judicial and legal establishment.

Conclusion

Are Gandhi's views relevant to today's needs? Of course, skeptics would perhaps dismiss these views. Indeed, in many cases requiring detailed analysis and consideration of constitutional considerations, the above informal process would simply not do. Whether the Tamil Nadu Governor was justified in inviting J. Jayalalitha to become the Chief Minister recently, or in the Court's interpretation of Article 45 enshrining it with the status of a fundamental right, the above simple, informal procedure is totally inadequate. But such cases in any case are few and far between and are generally quickly considered by the courts. What clogs the legal machinery are the thousands of ordinary cases involving property matter, petty crimes, or other minor disputes etc.

It would be pertinent to point out that the government has enacted the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996 whereby informal conciliation of disputes has been made an integral part of the legal process. This Act was introduced in the Parliament in 1995 but could not be passed then. As a result it was promulgated and repromulgated as an ordinance by the President but was finally approved by the Parliament in August 1996. The objective of the Act was to amend the domestic arbitration and international commercial arbitration.

The setting up of the Indian Council for Alternative Disputes resolution (ICADR) and strengthening of the *Lok Adalats* are steps in the direction of simplifying and expediting legal proceedings. Many disputes would be amenable to simple and quick resolution. This is also in consonance with the process of decentralisation of power and empowerment of the Panchayati Raj institutions as enacted in the 73rd Constitution Amendment Act of 1992. No doubt, legal experts and scholars would need to fine-tune the above ideas so that the simple procedures become suitable and infallible means of securing prompt and effective justice without creating bitterness and without rupturing the basic social fabric.

RAVI P. BHATIA

Book Reviews

Nalini Rajan, *Secularism, Democracy, Justice: Implications of Rawlsian Principles for India*, Sage Publications, New Delhi, Thousand Oaks and London, 1998, pp. 220

John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* (1971) has received since its publication a lot of attention throughout the world including in India. It is a long awaited theory of justice within the Anglo-Saxon tradition and has elicited responses from various quarters. Rawls identifies universal and common set of criteria of a just and well-ordered society that transcends the theoretical and practical applications of both capitalism and socialism. These are freedom, equity, efficiency, and stability, which are to be realized within a constitutional democratic state with a social market economy. In the West, critics have characterized the theory in various ways. Brian Barry labels it as "Gladstonian and Spencerian." Daniel Bell regards it as incorporating a socialistic ethic. Stuart Hampshire describes it as Christian incorporating ideas similar to those of the English socialists like Anthony Crosland and Richard Henry Tawney. Robert Paul Wolff describes it as utopian. Amy Gutman points out that the basic thrust behind Rawls' liberalism is democratic socialism. Bernard Crick and Norman Daniels see it as a liberal theory. Ronald Dworkin describes it as a right-based liberal theory. Crawford B. Macpherson dismisses it as a liberal theory attempting to precariously balance between the two models of human nature, namely that of a possessive individual with that of an individual as a developer and an exenter. Michael Sandel views it as a deontological liberal theory ignoring the claims of the community. Robert Nisbet terms it as Rousseau in spirit. The Neoconservatives in the United States have been perturbed by New Egalitarianism of Rawls and Jencks. Irving Kristol, its high priest, warns of the destruction of a liberal society because of Rawls' stress on equality.

In comparison, in India the general trend of assessment of the Rawlsian paradigm has been that it is a liberal theory of justice. There is a welcome change in Nalini Rajan's *Secularism, Democracy, Justice: Implications of Rawlsian Principles for India*, which tries to apply Rawls' theoretical paradigm in understanding the concepts of secularism, democracy, and justice as defined and practised in the Indian context. As she writes, "political theory is primarily concerned with the analysis of general normative principles relating to public policy" (p. 35). However, the application raises more questions both in terms of methodology and subject-matter than it answers.

The author mentions the mutual exclusiveness of individual liberty and social justice that existed till the attempt of Rawls ignoring the entire democratic socialist tradition of Cole and Tawney, and the important theorists of the Welfare State like Titmuss and Townsend. She also ignores the entire Keynesian consensus of the post-Second World War period. Specifically in her use of Rawlsian categories she totally overlooks Rawls' notion of a well-ordered society and does not take note of important indicators like self-respect, overlapping consensus, lexical ordering of liberty, and the elevation of the worst off. Her argument (p. 15) that economic liberalism can be separated from political liberalism has no sound basis, especially when theorists from all ideological positions accept their interdependence. This is clearly articulated by Medvedev who correctly points out that democracy is as much a necessity for politics as it is for economics. Even in the developing world, as articulated by Kothari, the constitutional democratic order is *a priori* to both development and social justice. Much of the malady in the Indian situation has been due to the tendency to separate the two; for, that has led to poor economic performance of the country which had led many to comment that India's primary problem is economic and not political. Moreover, Rajan's attempt to bring in Marxism within the Rawlsian discourse (p. 204) is inappropriate as Rawls endorses Tucker's statement that "Marxism is beyond justice."

In fact, the book could well have been written without any reference to Rawls, as there is hardly any attempt to test the hypothesis or arguments in the light of the Rawlsian paradigm. It is not a work either in political theory or on Indian politics. Rajan calls Indian democracy uneven but still contends that Rawls' theory is applicable (p. 27) citing one casual example of the Shah Bano case. The fact that a Hindu majority, which is about 83 per cent of the population, could go against the minority community is possible only hypothetically. But that does not happen because in India, as elsewhere in other liberal democracies, pluralism works in a variety of ways. Moreover, there are several checks like constitutional provisions, the rule of law, freedom and role of the press, and multi-party system which, to use Sen's phrase, forms the foundational concepts of democracy. These operate as much in India as elsewhere. The existence of these institutions has compelled the ruling parties to check mass miseries or face the prospect of losing the next elections. In such a situation, the author's argument that the state can promote individual autonomy (p. 31) is hard to accept as a highly statist view is normally detrimental to enhancement of individual rights, specially in India where a colonial overdeveloped state retards the proper flowering of a civil society.

The book also unnecessarily tries to sensationalize the communal tension in India by paraphrasing a well-known and immortal phrase from the *Communist Manifesto*, "The Spectre of communalism is haunting India" (p. 41). Rajan's argument that "inter-communal conflict has become almost the order of the day" (p. 41) is a gross exaggeration as there has been no

marked increase in communal violence in India in the recent past. The author ignores two important facts: first, the Congress Party under the leadership of Mrs Indira Gandhi initiated the tilt towards a majority community support which Mr Rajiv Gandhi carried forward. As such, the communalization process (even if one accepts the term) originates not with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) but with the Congress. Second, to rule a diverse country like India with its multitudes of minorities one is to be a pluralist even if not by choice but definitely by compulsion. The phrase Congressization or humanization of the BJP has become a part of modern political culture in India. BJP is as much a "catch them all" party as any other party in India. If the Communists in India by the compulsion of electoral politics have largely become social democratic in practice, so has the BJP. What the author ignores is the important fact that extreme parties in liberal democracy seldom capture power and operate only in the fringe. As a serious contender for power in India, the BJP has become as much an umbrella party as the Congress.

Rajan considers Mahatma Gandhi's policy of mixing religion with politics as a disaster (p. 72) without analyzing his important contribution in laying the foundations of a modern pluralistic democracy in India in the background of India's partition on grounds of religion. She argues for a rational basis to politics without any recourse to religion. Not only Oakeshott criticises such rational enterprises which rules out habits and traditions but also the fact that such a rational discourse is not only impossible in India but also anywhere else. In the context of South Asia, the author ignores the point made by Embree that religion provides the essential basis of political action. A secular basis of politics cannot stand on irreligious idioms but, as Mahatma Gandhi emphasizes, the need is to have equal respect to all religions.

The author's simplistic remarks about the tricky Kashmir problem (pp. 131-32) that democratization would solve the problem without a detailed programme defy any logic of scholarship. Once again, the oversimplification of her statements is reflected in her argument that India's hope lies in democratic forces as exemplified by diverse social movements (p. 201-02) and ignores their narrow social base and limited programme with limited mass mobilization. These are more in the nature of pressure groups and are not political parties. Rajan would have done better if she had concentrated on improving political parties and the state apparatus making them accountable and accessible to the ordinary citizens. This is specially so when she makes a comparison between India and China (p. 166). In this context Edgar Owens' analysis of a link between democracy and development is a useful one. Owens distinguishes false democracy from a true one using three indicators, namely the access of ordinary people to education, resources, and justice.

The book does not even mention the Lockean heritage of Nozick (p. 207) and that he is made out to be more a Kantian than Lockean which

is a negation of his framework in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* (1974). The author does not mention a single important writer on Indian politics, like Kothari, Morris-Jones, or the Rudolphs. The book is grossly inadequate both in clarifying Rawlsian concepts and in dissecting the complexities of contemporary Indian politics.

Sushila Ramaswamy

S.N. Mishra and Sweta Mishra, *Decentralised Governance*, Shipra Publications, New Delhi, 2002, pp. 210

"One of the tasks of nation-building and development," writes Milton J. Esman, "is to bring members of the national community into a network of relationships and institutions which enable them to participate actively in decisions affecting their individual and group welfare. While this is true of all nations, it has posed a considerable problem to the developing nations. Various countries have started experimenting with different types of politico-administrative institutions which would provide opportunities to people to take part in nation-building; the nature, character, and scope of such institutions have varied depending upon the attitudes of their national elites and level of development of the country concerned. However, their capacities for mobilizing the effective participation of rural material and human resources have been dependent on the governmental processes and structures.

In this book under review, *Decentralised Governance* by S.N. Mishra and Sweta Mishra, an attempt is made to analyse systematically the functioning of democratic institutions at the grossroot level in a historical perspective, as also of the function and work culture of the decentralized administrative set-up and the nuances of development mechanism.

There can be two approaches to the study and formulation of the concept of panchayati raj—the normative and the empirical. The normative theorist would like to construct an ideal conceptual model according to his own vision and aspirations. The empiricist, on the contrary, would be interested in studying the concept in operation, in identifying the gap between the ideal and the real, in indicating the operational trends that appear to influence or modify the concept in practice or even to push back new conceptual horizons, and, finally, in projecting an empiricist's view of the emerging concept of Panchayati Raj. A stage may, thus, be reached in the realm of the thought processes when the empiricist may come to press for an altogether new conceptual model or, at any rate, to make a serious plea for reorienting the ideal construct in the light of emerging operational trends.

It has therefore to be recognized at the outset that a worthwhile attempt at projecting the concept of Panchayati Raj has to be of a syncretic nature, aiming at a synthesis of the normative and the empirical approaches. In fact, the concept of Panchayati Raj has to be evolved with a distinct operational bias and, as such, has to be rooted in a sort of empirical-cum normative approach. And this is precisely what has been done here in this book.

In this broader framework, the concern in this work is to test good governance in the framework of effective involvement, participation, and control of the masses in the governance of grassroot democratic institutions. It becomes more important to examine, especially due to the provisions of the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Acts, 1992. When we talk about grassroot governance, many actors have to play their part effectively, if we have to achieve the goal of good governance. These representatives include Panches, Sarpanches, Pradhans, and Members and Chairmen of Zila Parishads as also the local-level bureaucracy and people involved with the formulation and implementation of decentralized planning, that is, members of District Planning Committee. These are the basic wings of governance at the grassroot level and any ailment in either of them may bring a disastrous impact on the whole mechanism of grassroot governance.

In the present work an attempt has been made to assess and examine as to whether any such ailment is diagnosed at the micro level and, if at all it is diagnosed, to suggest remedial measures for their better and effective functioning. However, before we could directly jump on the micro analysis, the attempt has been to present a theoretico-analytical as also the empirical analysis as prevailing at the macro level. In other words, the present work has not followed the beaten track of traditional approach, that is, moving from the micro to the macro level; rather, the authors have followed the macro-to-micro approach.

Therefore the endeavour here has been to study and present the macro view with emphasis on theoretico-conceptual analysis and then go to the greater details prevailing at the micro level.

The present study is an attempt towards judging the effectiveness of rural development programmes and examining the question whether the benefits of these programmes are reaching the target groups. Besides, the study also attempts to study as to why the two institutions of decentralized development, namely Panchayati Raj institutions and decentralized planning, failed in achieving their goals and to what extent they have become capable of solving the past problems within the new constitutional framework.

To support their findings, the authors of the book have taken into account the picture of the system both at the macro and the micro level as it operates. Though the micro analysis deals with the scenario of two districts only, the findings provide the scope for making generalizations about the

whole of the country as the human nature and politico-administrative set-up are almost the same throughout the country.

A useful book for those who are interested in the study of functioning of grassroot institutions vis-a-vis development programmes, it would also found useful by the general readers interested in studying the rural scenario as also the academics, public administrators, and practitioners.

Jai Narain Sharma

Bimal Prasad, ed., *Jayaprakash Narayan: Selected Works*, Volume two (1936-1939), Issued under the auspices of the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Manohar, New Delhi, 2001, pp. xxiii + 318

The second volume is a brilliant exposition of socialism by Jayaprakash Narayan (JP). Its language is one of the finest literary gems.

JP's main concern and crusade had been against the plight of the "common man." He has been exploited by and continues to be the victim of the feudal system created and supported by British imperialism.

R.K. Laxman, a cartoonist and creator of the common man says: "No, his state won't change. It is like the permanency of the sun and the moon. The world may change, but the condition of the common man will not. He is a permanent symbol of mute millions" (see *Delhi Times*, 3 January 2002, p. 1).

The God-given reservoir of JP's intellectual strength of mind has been amply demonstrated in his speeches, reports, letters, and resolutions. He had the capacity and ability to carry his conviction with his opponents. He felt that the common man is the mirror of the society and that he is the most reliable barometer of our ethical and moral pretensions.

The contents of the volume prove that JP meets the criteria of leadership laid down by Paul Keating: "Leadership is not about being nice. It is being right and being strong."

JP was a leading theoretician of his time as is evident from his book *Why Socialism?* In his view, Socialism is a system of social reconstruction, that is, the reorganization of the whole economic and social life of the country. He felt that "bell shaped" type of inequalities have totally affected the individual, the group, and the community. The main cause of social problems is unequal distribution of property and wealth.

JP refuted the idea that individualism has been the dominant feature of Indian society. It has never been so in the sense of narrow self-seeking as in a capitalist society. The main difference with the Indian National Congress is after talking of "revolutionary changes," it buries its head in the sand. One of the greatest contributions of socialism to humanity lies in the fact that it brings social progress under man's conscious control and direction.

So far with individualism and selfishness holding the centre of the stage, society has progressed blindly. A clash of purpose and interest has been the chief lever in its evaluation. JP was very much enamoured of the Russian model and specially of the model of planned economy.

There is a Gandhian alternative to socialism. What Gandhi said in the 1930s was said by Church divines and philosophers of the old order in Europe at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. The method suggested is invariably the betterment of human nature through education and placing of individuals of high moral and intellectual qualities in position of authority and power.

Gandhi accepts the established order with its high and low classes. its only concern is to improve the conduct of the higher classes towards the lower. Gandhi has signified his tacit approval of this large-scale organised theft and loot as well as violence. Karl Marx did the greatest service to humanity when he undertook the analysis of capitalist property and economy and proved that it was based on the exploitation of labour. Gandhi proposed the conversion of the upper classes into *trustees* of the lower classes by appealing to their sense of morality, by reaching their hearts. Gandhi's views have found ready and welcome acceptance among the upper classes and there are some among them who are their most eloquent defenders. In his lifetime, Gandhi did not succeed in reaching the hearts of the upper classes.

It is a truism that a great teacher has rarely been succeeded by an equal. "Followers" have always been known to be petty people, clipping texts and quarelling over interpretations.

The book is a definitive account of JP's leadership and his evolution as a mass mobilizer and organiser of a party. The differences between Rajendra Babu and him have been portrayed in a right and correct spirit. It is the magnanimity of both of them that the misunderstanding was removed. The political differences did not affect their personal relationship.

The introduction of the volume has very succinctly and forcefully brought out the salient features of the book. It is not only highly readable but objective and fair. The index, which is rarely found in such volumes, has enhanced the value of the book.

The volume is a mixture of theoretical analysis by an awesome marshalling of information and material by the editor. It shows his deep understanding of JP and his works. The chief merit of the volume is its comprehensiveness and honest presentation of JP's views allowing the readers to draw their own conclusions. The main thrust of JP in the volume has been to awaken the sleeping powers of the masses and make the Congress a dynamic and live organisation. JP was a civic-minded person with a constant eye to the public good. The volume will be useful to all who are concerned with JP's thought and action.

The volume has clearly demonstrated that JP possessed the requisite qualities of leadership—a stout heart, hard-headed resourcefulness, tact

and capacity of binding together highly individualistic and antagonistic elements. JP had excelled in his political skill, organisational genius, and qualities of leadership.

K.D. Gangrade

D. Renjini, *Nayar Women Today; Disintegration of Matrilineal System and the Status of Nayar Women in Kerala*, Classical Publishing Company, New Delhi, 2000, pp. 240

The book concentrates on the Nayar families of Kerala. It highlights their descent through the female line and the polyandrous way of living. The two dominant castes of Kerala, the Nayars and the Namboodiris, are compared. They have contrasting characteristics. Namboodiris have patrilineal and patrilocal joint family, whereas Nayars are based on the principle of matrilineal inheritance.

The author has concentrated on the Nayar families. The book reveals the tarawad, the Nayar joint family and the successive changes in it.

The matrilineal dominant castes of other parts of India and other countries like China are also highlighted. The study focuses on the changing social status of Nayar women. It is observed that the change from matrilineal to patrilineal system has affected their decision-making, disposing of property, bringing up children, freedom to choose their life partner, to choose their occupation, independence in home management, and partnership in political and religious activities.

The sample is chosen from Valluvanad area of Kerala. The author has keenly tried to observe the matrilineal and patrilineal families. She has taken pains to interview people above 70 years of age who had spent their childhood in tarawads under the strict control of Karanavan.

The study reveals that compared to women in the old system, modern women went for higher education, employment, had rights over their property, and had more freedom to choose their marriage partner. They enjoy full rights and play an important role in the upbringing of children. Their responsibility to control domestic affairs has increased. Now they are more interested in a discussion of rational and international problems.

The author has narrated a few very interesting case studies. The case of Indulekha is worth mentioning. She boldly revolts to the very personal decision like marriage to be decided by others.

The author has studied (a) the attitude of educated men towards women as compared to the uneducated men, and (b) the attitude of traditional women as compared to educated women.

The main conclusion drawn by the study is that the matriliney of Nayars cannot be considered as an indicator of women's high social status. Though

theoretically it seems like that, but practically it is very different. As the changes have taken place, women's position has definitely increased with regard to all matters related to them.

Anila Gangrade

Francois Gautier, *Rewriting Indian History*, Vikas Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, pp. 177

The learned author of this publication is a French journalist and a photographer who is also the political correspondent in India and South Asia for "Le Figaro," the newspaper, which has the largest circulation in France, and "Le Nouveau Quotidien" one of Switzerland's foremost dailies. However, the author is living in India and is married to an Indian and is living in India for more than 30 years. According to the author, his stay in India has helped him "to see through the usual clichés and prejudices on India, to which he subscribed for a long time, as most foreign (and sometimes, unfortunately, Indian) journalists, writers and historians do." He continues to shuttle between Delhi and the International City of Auroville near Pondicherry, where he resides most of the time. He is an author of two other books, namely *Arise Again, O'India*, and the recently released book titled *A Western Journalist on India—The Ferengi's Columns*.

According to the author, this book does not pretend to be a historical treatise either on India or on other civilisations, and that it only fleetingly uses events and people in an attempt to go beyond the superficial views that have usually been held on India by many historians. The views expressed in the book are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of either the publishers or "Le Figaro" the French newspaper which he has been representing in India. The book is *inter alia* dedicated to India which, according to the author, has given him much.

In the preface of the book the author states that many historical books have been written about the wonder that is India, which cast a sympathetic and benevolent look at what the author felt where some of the wonders of a bygone India, but in this book the author differs with them for many reasons. Firstly, the former historians often erroneously took as final and biased theory of an Aryan invasion, subjugating the Good Harappan (Dravidian) civilisation, a theory which the author needs to dismantle. Secondly, the majority of Western historians, post-date most Vedic events as their theory of Mohenjodaro being overrun by the barbarian Aryans cannot be substantiated. Thirdly, although those writers are full of praise for Indian culture, art, language, science, village life, their views on Hinduism seem to be a little warped and reflect a strong Western influence. In fact, most of the writers have no understanding of the greatness and

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importance of the Vedas. They have only flaunted ignorance and contempt for India's culture and have compared the vision of great sages, who lived at least 5,000 years ago, with the tales of the semi-barbarians.

Apart from the traditional Acknowledgement, Preface, Bibliography, and Index, there are fifteen chapters and it will not be possible to give a summary of each chapter.

In short, it can be stated that this wonderful book endeavours not only to show that India was great in all respects, spiritually, socially, culturally and even politically, but also that the same greatness of India still obtains and it is waiting to be manifested, waiting for India to awaken itself to Her real and own destiny. However, the author has also pinpointed the grave dangers being faced by India from within and from without. According to the author, who has delved deep into the depth and real history of India, has come to the conclusion that India can become Greater India only after the country has recovered her true soul, recouped Her Dharma, that She was centuries ago. The author still hopes that India can fulfil Her destiny as the Spiritual Leader of the World sooner. It is for this task that all Indians have to come together and remain united for all times to come.

The author has done a lot to remove the misunderstandings that have become common all over the world because of disinformations spelt out all over the world. In the last chapter, titled "The Final Dream" the author has given a summary of the great contributions made by Sri Aurobindo and The Mother and in conclusion it is stated that India will lead the world onto the way to supramentalisation, man after man, that which is above mind.

It is a rare book on the actual history of India and it is a book that must be read by each world citizen. But before the book is read, understood, and acted upon by the citizens of the world, it is necessary that every citizen of India should read, understand, and follow the task shown by the author through the history of our saints from the beginning of life in India till the recent saints like Sri Aurobindo and The Mother. On the basis of this treatise, it is time that more and more young Indians should do research work and promote similar books to awaken Indian masses throughout the length and breadth of this sub-continent before we can do anything for the good of humanity at large on this global village.

J.N. Puri

B.N. Ray, ed., *Contemporary Political Thinking*, Kanishka Publishers Distributors, New Delhi, pp. 510

With the renewal of normative political theory by John Rawls, a number of new issues have been examined by political theorists. The debate of modernity versus post modernity, democracy versus liberalism, and

morality versus justice has been entertained by scholars. The foundation of modernity laid during the Enlightenment period is now being seriously challenged. Self/Other relations and community orientation of people is being hotly debated. The normative issues of greater liberty and social justice has become important in contemporary debates. The diversity of issues, opinions, and particularistic approaches has made contemporary political thinking very complex. A comprehensive contemporary political theory has not emerged yet, as the time span is short, but debating collectively new issues of contemporary relevance is accepted as the preliminary requirement for theory-making.

The past thirty years have thrown up a remarkable body of literature exposing the sexist, racist, statist, elitist, nationalist, and other biases of traditional political philosophy. Although these writings were sometimes polemical, insufficiently rigorous, and lacked a constructive impulse, they persuasively exposed that the biases were not inadvertent and easily eliminable but deeply embedded in the very structure of traditional political philosophy, infecting its questions, answers, and methods of investigation as well as its conceptions of rationality, basic human capacities, needs, moral reasoning, and the good life.

Dr Ray's edited volume of fifteen assorted articles by competent scholars from across the world admirably surveys the growth and current status of political theory. The book admirably links political thinking with liberty, democracy, and human needs. A major issue of political conflict during the last three decades has been about whether a liberal democratic state should legitimately aim at ameliorating social problems and economic deprivation through public policy.

The essays, among other things, discuss the political philosophy of Thomas Jefferson, Mahatma Gandhi, Michael Oakeshott, Hannah Arendt, Karl Marx, and others. There is also a thematic discussion on political history and historical politics, crisis of socialism, and political theory of human needs. The book has an excellent introduction from the editor who is right when he states that "most of the political theorists were writing the obituaries of political theory in the 1950s. They could look back on two decades of political theory and find it nearly barren. But then there came the publication of John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* (1971) as the turning-point."

Political theory emerging as a reference point for political philosophers in the West has remained parochial. It has shown little interest in the political experiences, problems, and debates of the non-Western world. The latter continues to be treated as if its destiny lay in uncritically reproducing the historical experiences of the West, and its problems and aspirations are analyzed almost entirely in Western terms and categories. The ignorance of the non-Western world has several unfortunate consequences. Western political philosophy lacks both adequate protection against ethnocentric biases and a valuable source of critical self-

consciousness. It is also unable to appreciate the full range of the different visions of the good life, and to develop culturally sensitive categories of thought and moral principles indispensable for dealing with an increasingly interdependent world. Since the West today exercises considerable political, economic, and cultural power over the world, its distorted understanding of the latter encourages misguided policies and causes much avoidable moral and political havoc.

Western thinkers and scholars have turned their attention to the philosophical tradition of Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Gandhi has slowly emerged as a reference point. Dalton in his essay has tried to establish connections among Gandhi's key ideas of freedom (Swaraj), duty (Dharma), nonviolent action (Satyagraha), and self-reliance (Swadeshi). He argues that Gandhi's contribution to democratic thought is the way that he conceives of civic duty. Gandhi's idea of freedom is fundamentally different from the Anglo-American liberal conception because Gandhi places much emphasis on duty. The relationship that Gandhi makes between Swaraj and Dharma is thus "different voice" of Indian political thought. Dalton is not sure how Berlin, Cranston, Adler, Elshtain, Glendon or Wolin might regard Indian thought because none mentions non-Western thinkers. Only Sara Ruddick examines Gandhi seriously and appropriates his contribution to an ethic of care. Dalton does not suggest that modern Indian political thought presents a solution for the problem of the conflicting claims of individual freedom and social obligation but he feels that Indian political thought does offer a different voice that merits inclusion in Western political discourse. Dalton is very confident that Gandhi and others of his tradition might suggest that modern theory needs to discover resources for better conceptualizing a strong social conscience and commitment to a higher quality of civic life.

Douglas Allen's essay raises a number of challenges from modern political thinking that contend that Gandhi's approach reflects a premodern antimodern orientation, assumes an essentialist metaphysical and spiritual approach, and is largely outdated and irrelevant to contemporary political thinking. However, Allen maintains that Gandhi's political thought, when selectively appropriated and reconstituted, can provide a radical critique of, and positive alternative to, modern political thinking, it can serve as an urgently needed catalyst for rethinking dominant modern political positions. He argues that there is not one correct absolute decontextualized political thought of Gandhi, that his political thinking is eclectic and at times contradictory, and that relating Gandhi's approach to contemporary political thinking involves a dynamic domain of contestation and the reconstitution, revalorization, and development of diverse Gandhian positions. Allen formulates Gandhi's metaphysical and spiritual framework as the foundation of his political thinking by focusing on his key concepts of truth (*satya*) and nonviolence (*ahimsa*), and he focuses on a particular feature of this essential framework: Gandhi's analysis of self and self-other relations

with his radical inversion of the dominant models of self-other relations that have constituted modern Western political thinking. Finally, Albrecht Wellmer argues that in her essay "On Revolution," Hannah Arendt has tried to settle accounts with both the liberal-democratic and the Marxist traditions, that is, with those dominant traditions of modern political thought which, in one way or other, can be traced back to the European Enlightenment. Arendt's basic thesis is that both liberal democrats and Marxists have misunderstood the drama of modern revolutions because they have repeatedly failed in their attempt to establish a political space or public freedom in which people as free and equal citizens would take their common concerns into their own hands. Both the liberals and the Marxists equally harboured a conception of the political according to which the final goal of politics would be something beyond politics—whether it be the unencumbered pursuit of private happiness, a realization of social justice, or the free association of the producers in a classless society. Arendt's critique of Marxist politics has already become a *locus classicus* and requires no further justification. Her critique of liberal and social democracy in modern industrial societies seems more provocative from the present point of view. Wellmer has raised the question whether the provocation is still a genuine one.

Tracy B. Strong in his essay has tried to establish a link between knowledge and love. He notes that Hippocrates cannot manage his eroticism and is not ready for philosophy. Socrates, by contrast, has integrated both eros and philosophy. Indeed Socrates moves easily from the love of an other to the love of knowledge.

Fred Dallmayr in his essay on Derrida has tried to retrieve one most neglected concept of classical political theory, that is, friendship. He notes that for a considerable time now, friendship has been under siege. Over a period of many centuries, self has been steadily removed or distanced from other selves—with the result that ancient notions like "concord" or "communion" have been increasingly problematized, if not entirely eclipsed. Several factors have contributed to this process in Western civilization.

B.N. Ray in his provocative essay examines the concept of human needs in political theory. Beginning his discussion with Plato, Rousseau, Hegel, Marx, Marcuse, and Macpherson, he examines the debates around the human/non-human animal distinction for needs, along with more crucial relationship between needs and wants and the issue of relativism. He forcefully maintains that Hegel and Marx offer a fruitful contribution to fundamental debates in the modern needs theory, namely the distinction between universal and particular conceptions of needs. The search for objective or universal needs by many modern need theorists often result in the neglect of the particular needs of a minority culture. Both Hegel and Marx understand universal and particular needs in their movement and transition from one to the other in their difference and unity. This provides the possibility of perceiving not only needs of a particular culture. Ray

insists that an Hegelian-Marxist dialectical approach to modern need theory will serve a useful reference point for an analysis of contemporary society and construction of a good polity. Need can then be understood in its movement and transition, rather than as a static concept distinct from other related concepts. In this way, we can better capture the different manifestations of needs and their satisfaction through the self-activity of human beings.

The essays in this book are major contributions to the theoretical understanding of contemporary society. They represent a wide range of themes bringing forth a varied set of concerns and positions. The diversity of perspectives and problematics will hopefully enable readers to gain access not only to the broad scope that characterizes the contemporary society but also to new imaginations and provocative insights that go beyond post-modern, post-communist society to design a democratic and humanistic society.

Edited skilfully by Dr B.N. Ray, the book provides an impressive canvas of contemporary political thinking. It will be an essential reading for students, teachers, and social activists who wish to know the nature of political theory that affects the social, cultural, political, and economic processes in the contemporary world. The editor richly deserves our congratulations for bringing out this volume which will be of great use to students and scholars of political thought.

Naresh Dadhich

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Legacy and Future of Nonviolence

Edited by
Mahendra Kumar
Peter Low

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